Experiential learning in planning education: 
Resources and tools for good practice

Final Report 2014

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Partner institutions: Edith Cowan University, Griffith University, La Trobe University, University of Tasmania, Planning Institute of Australia

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<www.usc.edu.au/explearning>

<experientiallearninginplanning.com.au>

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External evaluator, Dr Nicole Gurran, Associate Professor, The University of Sydney
Respondents to student, practitioner and employer surveys as part of the case studies.
List of acronyms used

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>Term</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ALTC</td>
<td>Australian Learning and Teaching Council</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANZ</td>
<td>Australia and New Zealand</td>
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<tr>
<td>ANZAPS</td>
<td>Australian and New Zealand Association of Planning Schools</td>
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<tr>
<td>APA</td>
<td>American Planning Association</td>
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<tr>
<td>AQF</td>
<td>Australian Qualifications Framework</td>
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<tr>
<td>BRUP</td>
<td>Bachelor of Regional and Urban Planning</td>
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<tr>
<td>CPD</td>
<td>Continuing Professional Development</td>
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<tr>
<td>ECU</td>
<td>Edith Cowan University</td>
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<tr>
<td>EL</td>
<td>Experiential Learning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ELIP</td>
<td>Experiential Learning in Planning project</td>
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<tr>
<td>GIS</td>
<td>Geographic Information System</td>
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<tr>
<td>GU</td>
<td>Griffith University</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LTU</td>
<td>La Trobe University (Bendigo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NGO</td>
<td>Non-Government Organisation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OLT</td>
<td>Office for Learning and Teaching (Australian Department of Education)</td>
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<tr>
<td>PD</td>
<td>Professional development</td>
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<tr>
<td>PIA</td>
<td>Planning Institute of Australia</td>
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<tr>
<td>RTPI</td>
<td>Royal Town Planning Institute (UK)</td>
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<tr>
<td>USC</td>
<td>University of the Sunshine Coast</td>
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<tr>
<td>UTAS</td>
<td>University of Tasmania</td>
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<td>WEQ</td>
<td>Work Experience Questionnaire</td>
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<tr>
<td>WIL</td>
<td>Work Integrated Learning</td>
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<tr>
<td>Term</td>
<td>Meaning /interpretation</td>
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<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accreditation</td>
<td>Accreditation is a process of assessing competency according to standards and is usually the responsibility of a professional institute. For example, the Planning Institute of Australia certifies that an accredited tertiary planning institution is competent to train and test individuals according to agreed professional planning standards.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Authentic Assessment</td>
<td>A type of assessment in which students are generally asked to perform real-world tasks which demonstrate the meaningful application of higher order knowledge and skills essential to becoming a planner, including the application of knowledge and skills in planning-related areas.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Blended Learning</td>
<td>Blended learning provides opportunities for students to engage in discussing, debating, developing understanding, reflecting and building knowledge while integrating face-to-face and technology-mediated interactions. The blended learning continuum recognises that the use of technologies for learning and teaching is not ‘one size fits all’. Rather, the effective integration of educational technologies is fit-for-purpose, depending on the underlying aims and outcomes of the curriculum, learning and teaching processes and spaces, and the needs of students.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Capstone Project</td>
<td>A capstone project is usually offered in the final year of a program and enables students to integrate knowledge gained across a number of courses to address a professional issue and make informed professional judgements, drawing on insights, knowledge and skills from several years of learning. Students generally need to demonstrate they meet program graduate attributes, not just course learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course/Unit Coordinator</td>
<td>A course coordinator is accountable for the knowledge and skills delivered in a course, the different types of assessment employed, and, where applicable, is the individual who coordinates the inputs of different instructors delivering material in the course.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Course/Unit</td>
<td>A course may be referred to as a paper, a unit, or a subject. Each individual course is given a value to represent the proportion of the award program that it comprises. Each unit or course has a course coordinator.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>e-Portfolio</td>
<td>An e-Portfolio is the product created by learners, comprising a collection of digital artefacts articulating their learning, experiences and achievements. It can be used as supporting documentation when applying for employment, membership of professional</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
Experiential Learning (EL) In this project, 'experiential learning' is generally defined as a purposeful process of engaged, active learning in which the student constructs knowledge, skills or values by means of direct experiences in authentic, ‘real world’ contexts. It is based on Kolb's (1984) theory of experiential learning whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of active experience and reflection on that experience. Experiential learning is usually seen as a departure from traditional lecture-/tutorial-based courses.

Experiential Learning (EL) Activities

Case study A case-study presents a real life situation – an issue, strategy or outcome. Through educator-student interaction, students draw out descriptions, explanations, alternative scenarios and implications, which substantiate their results. Students are required to link theoretical and practical knowledge and demonstrate creativity and critical thinking. These may or may not be group activities.

Field trip Field trips provide students with the opportunity for first-hand observation and experiences directly relating to their studies, and may include local, interstate and international inspections, projects, trips and tours.

Fieldwork Fieldwork is completed in an environment normally outside the university, sometimes with the assistance of another organisation. The focus is on linking what is learnt in class with what is seen, collected and tested in the field. The specific aims of fieldwork may vary, including observing in the field principles learnt in class; applying classroom knowledge to real situations, and collecting information through surveys and observations.

Guest lecturer/speakers In experiential learning terms, a guest lecturer (or guest speaker) may be used to introduce students to a wide range of planning roles, injecting real-world experience into the classroom to complement academic/theoretical knowledge. Students need to be able to reflect on the contribution of that real world knowledge.
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Industry Placement
An industry placement is a work placement which is completed in an organisation normally outside the university. The focus is on applying and adapting what has been learnt in an academic setting. It is a type of practicum.

Laboratory class
A laboratory class is a learning situation which usually involves a brief presentation by the educator, tutor or demonstrator followed by students participating in various exercises, simulations or experiments in a specifically designed/equipped space, such as a computer lab.

Practicum
A practicum is a learning opportunity in which the student spends a defined period of time in a professional setting normally outside the university, relevant to their main area of study. The student will normally engage in a range of professional activities, depending on the learning outcomes for the practicum and may be required to create a product for reflection, learning or assessment.

Role Play
Simulation of a real world experience in which students take on stakeholder roles, face problems, formulate strategies and receive feedback about the consequences of decisions made. Role play may range from simple and unstructured to formal rule-based games. This process enables students to ‘stand in another person’s shoes’.

Simulation
Application of a simulation tool facilitates experimentation with real world systems that would otherwise be either logistically or ethically impossible or cost prohibitive. The increasing complexity of urban and regional systems has increased the usefulness of simulation as a decision-support tool. Generally the use of quantitative simulation methods is popular (e.g. counting pedestrian or traffic flows). However, qualitative simulations (playing a role) are also useful.

Studio
In a studio session, students spend time in a studio learning environment, usually working on hands-on development of creative products, drawing on diverse resource materials and often working in groups.

Workshop
A workshop is a practical session facilitated by one or more instructors that gives students opportunities to learn collaboratively, practise particular skills and engage in individual and group activities.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Formative Assessment</th>
<th>Formative assessment is that provided in class which reinforces what students have learned and reviews their progress.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Graduate Attributes</td>
<td>Graduate Attributes (GAs) are the qualities and skills that universities value and endeavour to support in the development of students. These qualities and skills have been specifically chosen to give graduates comprehensive preparedness for the planning workplace as well as enhancing their capacities to be leaders through leveraging ethical and other knowledge.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Peer Assessment</td>
<td>Peer Assessment is a process whereby students peer review and/or grade assignments or tests based on assessment criteria. The practice improves students' understanding of course materials as well as saving instructors’ time.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Performance-Based Assessment</td>
<td>Performance-based assessment is designed to provide an overall demonstration of student learning and the scope of knowledge a student has on a subject, rather than simply testing the accuracy of their response to a selection of questions based on standardised testing methods.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Portfolio Assessment</td>
<td>Portfolio Assessment is based on a systematic collection of student work that illustrates a student's achievements. It can record and comment on student learning and growth over time through reflection and self-evaluation and/or demonstrate learning outcomes or products based on guidelines for selecting and evaluating the contents.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem-Based Learning (PBL)</td>
<td>Problem-Based Learning is a student-centred active learning process by which students learn from focusing on a problem to stimulate learning and develop problem-solving skills. The instructor is more of a facilitator of knowledge creation and a guide than a disseminator of knowledge. PBL often takes place in small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional Development</td>
<td>Professional Development (PD) or Continuing Professional Development (CPD) or ‘life-long’ learning refers to the acquisition of knowledge and skills for personal or professional advancement through a range of formal and informal mechanisms such as coursework, conferences, seminars, coaching and communities of practice. Ideally, it includes a reflective or evaluative phase.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Recognition of prior learning</td>
<td>Recognition of prior learning (RPL) is the process of assessing knowledge and skills developed through preceding learning, informal studies or work-related learning, to determine whether the skills and knowledge acquired contribute in meeting the learning outcomes and assessment criteria of a particular course in the degree program. A successful RPL application will reduce the number of courses required to complete an award program.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reflection</td>
<td>Reflection is the capacity to reflect on experience, engage with prior</td>
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knowledge, and deconstruct and reconstruct understanding of a situation or experience. The outcome of effective reflection is that students are able to critique their own work against learning outcomes, and identify their own learning needs at particular stages of their academic program. Towards the end of their formal studies, students should be able to make linkages between what they have learnt formally and the skills, competencies and knowledge gained (informally) through life, fostering dialectic of theory and practice. Deeper thinking is involved.

**Self-Assessment**

Students are asked to make a judgement as to whether they have met prescribed assessment criteria. They gain an understanding of criteria for good learning, and what is effective evidence for demonstrating achievement of criteria.

**Summative assessment**

Summative assessment summarises the learning of students up to a point in time, usually against certain criteria. It is usually expressed as a grade based on their level of achievement of the learning outcomes set in a course.

**Work-based Learning**

Work-based learning or work placement exposes students to ‘real-world’ problems through being in the workplace supervised by professional planners, dealing with the issues that planners face on a day-to-day basis. Relevant examples range from brief encounters (e.g. shadowing a planner for a day) through short projects to full-time employment-based learning programs including internships or cadetships.
Foreword

That planning education needs to be practical and relevant to ensure graduates are well prepared for the challenges of the workplace is a given. This demand comes from employers, the Planning Institute of Australia, and the students themselves. Yet aligning planning education with these expectations is not as straightforward as it may seem. There are multiple expectations and understandings of what skills and abilities a ‘work-ready’ graduate might possess, along with different pathways for them to get there.

Securing a student placement in a working office offers one model, and many students avail themselves of this opportunity whether or not it is required by their university program. The concept of experience-based learning opens up a greater array of opportunities. It represents a constructive approach for achieving better outcomes for both students and employers using models that offer both intellectual and vocational benefits.

This Experiential Learning in Planning Education research project explores the opportunities for learning while doing. It takes a broad view of what sort of practical learning activities might be embraced and applies some consistent evaluation measures to those identified practices. It asks critical questions of different learning and teaching modes. Do these modes deliver valuable learning outcomes in ways that represent ‘better’ options than traditional learning modes? In what manner can the ‘experiential’ aspects of the delivery mode provide learning outcomes that are not easily achieved by other modes? How well can these modes be integrated into existing courses and how may they complement existing practices?

These are important questions and are directly relevant to current considerations of curriculum design and what constitutes best practice in planning education. This is an ongoing concern regarding the accreditation processes managed by the Planning Institute of Australia and the objective of ensuring students are being well prepared for their professional life and for their required work skills and responsibilities.

The case studies presented in this report and on the project website are evidence of the wide diversity of measures that can offer ‘experiential learning’. They constitute resources, guidance and inspiration for the enhancement and redesign of current learning practice in Australian planning schools. Importantly, they illustrate the potential to better integrate ‘work-related’ activities into learning modes that extend well beyond traditional work placements.

This original, collaborative research project is particularly timely in that it provides options for experiential learning that are not reliant on a buoyant economy to meet the growing demand for student work placements. Instead, the ‘toolkit’ introduces flexibility, discretion and innovation into learning and teaching strategies responsive to many different employment settings.

Professor Robert Freeman and Michael Papageorgiou, Project Reference Group
Executive Summary

This project, Experiential Learning in Planning Education: Resources and Tools for Good Practice, builds on the findings of previous reviews of educational effectiveness and experiential learning (EL) practice in Australian planning programs. It explores the concept of experiential learning and its role in meeting new professional skills and identifies the need to broaden the definition of experiential learning from its current focus which is mainly on work experience. The project team has worked together in 2012 and 2013 to undertake a baseline survey of current EL practice, to prepare exemplar case-studies, and to develop an online toolkit of ‘good practice’ resources. Wider dissemination presentations, workshops and seminars were conducted by project partners during 2014.

Project leaders were Dr Claudia Baldwin and Associate Professor Johanna Rosier of the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Partner university researchers in the team include:

- Mr Tim Perkins, Edith Cowan University
- Associate Professor Eddo Coiacetto, Griffith University
- Associate Professor Trevor Budge, La Trobe University
- Dr Andrew Harwood, University of Tasmania
- Dr Christine Slade, USC (Project Manager).

Mr Ari La Vache represented the Planning Institute of Australia in the research. Please see Appendix A for further information about the project team.

The project has resulted in the following outcomes:

- engagement of Australian and New Zealand accredited planning programs through the Australian and New Zealand Association of Planning Schools (ANZAPS) and the Replan email network
- baseline documentation of Australian and New Zealand accredited planning programs’ experiential learning components of planning courses and learning assessment techniques
- exemplar case studies of experiential learning activities from the planning schools of the five participating university
- improved understanding of the development, resourcing and evaluation of effective experiential learning opportunities in the participating planning schools
- completion of an accepted and consistent framework for academic standards and evaluation of experiential learning practice in Australian planning schools, including measurement techniques and instruments applied and tested by researchers in partner universities to evaluate the effectiveness of experiential learning experiences
• completion of an easily accessible online package (a 'toolkit') of professional development material of experiential learning activities and assessment techniques for improving teaching and learning outcomes in all Australian and New Zealand planning programs – the most important output of the project. The toolkit may be found at <experientiallearninginplanning.com.au/>.

An initial baseline survey of 18 planning programs in Australia and New Zealand, in early 2012, stimulated wide interest in this project. One of the issues that emerged in the baseline study and during team meetings was the need for a common language and common understanding of EL. As a result, a list of acronyms and a glossary of terms feature at the beginning of this final report. A notable outcome was that all responding programs had elements of EL in their curriculum, with one program using EL in 18 courses (units). A continuum of university-based to externally-oriented activity was reported. For example, 82 courses reported using guest speakers compared to 12 courses identified as employing work experience, with simulated development (43) and field trip (41) activities also commonly mentioned.

A framework comprising eight major principles for effective EL was developed from an analysis of the literature. These principles could then be applied by researchers in the partner universities across the continuum of predominantly university-based to external work-based EL activities to improve practice. The researchers used the principles to enhance EL activities in their courses, and to assess the effectiveness of EL activity through student surveys and feedback from external practitioners involved in the program. The analysis of these courses resulted in 17 different case studies of EL activities contributed by the partner universities.

The case studies form part of an online toolkit which provides resources for all planning programs to improve their current EL practice. Uptake of outcomes will be facilitated through providing training on use of the framework, curriculum activities, and assessment options, and through online sharing of additional case studies submitted through the website. Planning educators will have well-defined principles to guide the development and use of EL activities based on the collaborative process of applying the experiential learning principles.

The key challenge is that experiential learning is time-consuming and demanding of the educators who need to organise activities and interaction, as well as manage risk with the 'real world' to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved. Survey participants noted that at times it is easier not to use EL approaches, but participating programs agreed that EL is more gratifying for the educator and provides better learning outcomes for the student.

From the beginning of the project, dissemination of the research results and the framework has been a priority for the research team, along with engagement of key stakeholders. Newsletters have been placed on the project website and disseminated through RePlan (academic planners’ e-network). The team has also presented workshops and papers at three successive annual ANZAPS conferences in 2011, 2012 and 2013 and will present in 2014. The team also presented at the 2013 and 2014 National Congress of the Planning Institute of Australia; prepared academic papers; and interacted with PIA national and PIA state education committees; and School Planning Advisory Committees in each partner university where possible.
Professions around the world, such as architecture and engineering, as well as planning, require their tertiary education programs to produce graduates who are future employees with skills and knowledge at an accredited standard to carry out a certain level and range of work. Professional bodies such as the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) review the curriculum, faculty expertise, and evidence of teaching outcomes to assess if they meet required standards of content, teaching and learning. Students not only accept, but also expect, that the profession is strategically guiding their professional education.

Based on the outcomes of this project, the research team believes EL should be an integral element of each year of an accredited planning program, and that each program needs to demonstrate how an EL approach is being applied across the four-year program, with courses building in greater complexity and exposure to real world experiences. EL could be evidenced through many activities, ranging across guest lectures, field trips, role plays, and design studios related to a ‘real’ site or client. While study tours or international field trips would not be mandatory, their value as transformative experiences should also be recognised.

The development of a long-term relationship between practitioners and educators is seen as a crucial aspect of EL, resulting in potential new forms of education and research. The involvement of practitioners in the education of student planners could also be designed to increase flexibility of work-based learning and to customise further educational initiatives. Planning practitioners have supported tertiary planning programs for a number of years, through involvement in guest lectures, role play, acting as the client in a project, and/or hosting a student as part of a practicum or work experience. It could, therefore, be useful to provide greater recognition of a practitioner’s contribution through awarding PD points as part of the PIA’s Continuing Professional Development program. Such recognition would provide an additional incentive for practitioners to support tertiary planning education, and would enhance experiential learning and work-based experiences for students.
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Chapter 1: Introduction

This project builds on the findings of previous reviews of planning education and experiential learning in planning courses in Australia. It explores the definition of experiential learning (see below) and the need to review and broaden the definition, which to date has largely tended to focus on work experience (Freestone et al., 2007; Jones et al., 2009a). It also documents the level and use of experiential learning in Australian-accredited planning qualifications and its role in contributing to improving the relevance of planning education in meeting the demand for traditional and new skills of the profession of urban, regional and rural planning.

This project has found that utilising a collaborative process of development and testing of a consistent policy and evaluation framework, based on experiential learning theory, provides planning educators with well-defined principles to guide the development and use of experiential learning tasks. Further, it provides mechanisms to evaluate the effectiveness of practical learning across the range of experiential learning activities, thereby assisting in course revision and development, greater relevance to vocational outcomes for planning professionals and improved provision of teaching and learning.

Outcomes from the project include:

- an analysis of the results of a detailed survey that benchmarked experiential learning practices across all planning schools in Australia and New Zealand;
- a set of collaboratively developed resource materials of experiential learning ideas, tasks and assessment instruments to assist educators to improve delivery and assessment of a broad range of experiential learning activities;
- examples of case studies of experiential learning activities from five participating university planning schools. These are not only included in this report, but are easily accessible through an online toolkit <experientiallearninginplanning.com.au/>. The provision of resource material and case studies is an important addition to the body of experiential learning as they include practical material which can be used by those teaching in planning schools.

In this project, 'experiential learning' is generally defined as:

\[
\text{a purposeful process of engaged, active learning in which the student constructs knowledge, skills or values by means of direct experiences in authentic, real world contexts (Kassem, 2007 p. 2).}
\]

Kolb's (1984) theory provides the basis for experiential learning, explored further in Chapter 2, which refers to learning by doing, whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of active experience and reflection on that experience (Cornell et al., 2013; Kolb & Kolb, 2005). The knowledge gained is then used as the basis for learning from new experiences.

In particular, the online toolkit is an important part of the project outcomes. It
provides support for emerging as well as established planning schools which are looking to use experiential learning to improve the student learning experience. To achieve this, the project has established a process, which is intended to embed change through engaging professional practitioners and planning academics as well as the planning program accreditation body, the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA). A project reference group contributed to project development, reviewed ongoing progress, and gave formative and summative feedback.

1.1: Project rationale

The early years of the 21st century have presented demanding challenges to planners and the planning profession. The agenda for planners in practice is widening: legislation is increasingly more complex and the amount of legislation required to be covered in planning courses is greater; communities are more articulate, sophisticated and demanding in the information they require and expect; extensive community consultation is now the norm; well-informed communities are more effective at exerting pressure on planners and decision-makers; cities are the scene of conflicting expectations and demands; and large-scale environmental management and resource development agendas are impacting urban, regional and rural areas.

A National Inquiry into Planning Education and Employment (PIA, 2004) recommended increasing the professionalism of planners through matching skill gaps with training; bringing planning educators and practitioners closer together; and increasing collaboration between planning schools and the PIA. The Inquiry identified the need for improved skills for planners in project management, development assessment, urban design, strategic and policy planning, negotiation, communication, teamwork and complex analysis. It also mentioned new content areas such as social, environmental and transport planning. The report recommended a review of the PIA Code of Recognition of Planning Courses and Education Policy (s6.3.2). A few years later, another review of planning education for the PIA, by Gurran et al. (2008), identified emerging trends that needed to be addressed in university planning programs based on an expectation that universities would equip planning students for the workplace. Among other observations and recommendations, this review called for a model of learning that not only extends across core knowledge areas but includes greater application grounded in local practice, rather than a reliance on pure academic knowledge.

These two reports encouraged planning educators to provide more workplace-based experience in the public and private sectors in urban, regional and rural areas and greater involvement in education by professional planners. Based on the premise that many of the skill areas required in planning can be enhanced through experiential learning, the PIA endorses, through its accreditation policy, a combination of academic planning education and appropriate models of practical activities and work experience (PIA, 2012). There is now an ongoing dialogue between planning educators and prospective planning employers about how to integrate practice-based experiences into planning education.
1.2: Origins of the project and the impacts of a pilot study

This project emerged from a discussion about the benefits and characteristics of experiential learning by planning educators at the 2009 Australian and New Zealand Association of Planning Schools (ANZAPS) Annual Congress in response to a presentation by Baldwin and Rosier (2009). At the heart of the discussion were questions such as:

- Does or should the term 'experiential learning' extend beyond work-integrated learning, internships, or practicum i.e. assessed work experience?
- If so, what are characteristics of, or principles for developing, a good experiential learning task or course?
- How is the student's learning based on real world experience best assessed?
- Are there benefits in encouraging or even mandating certain aspects of experiential learning in urban and regional planning curricula?

Planning educators Baldwin and Rosier from the University of the Sunshine Coast provided input into the discussion based on principles for experiential planning derived from a literature review tested in their pilot study. The pilot study sought responses from students about their learning from a range of potential 'experiential activities'. Details of the pilot are described in Baldwin and Rosier (2009) (submitted) and shown in Figure 1.1 below. The study pointed out that a number of curriculum features, such as clearer learning goals and student assessment, could be improved in order for students to make the most of experiential learning.

The pilot provided the impetus for the University of the Sunshine Coast to apply for funding from the Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) – now the Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) – Griffith, La Trobe and Edith Cowan Universities, the University of Tasmania, and the Planning Institute of Australia, which resulted in the commencement of this project in September 2011.
The remainder of this chapter describes the aims and outcomes of the project, and its links to other OLT projects, and outlines the format of this report.

**1.3: Project aims**

The overarching aim of this project is to improve the integration of practice-based learning experiences in Australian planning higher education through developing an integrated package of resources that will promote and enable the delivery of effective education practice of experiential learning. This will, in turn, contribute to improved student learning outcomes. The package of resources includes:

1. baseline data of current experiential learning practice in Australian and New Zealand planning schools to inform academic standards and professional accreditation (Chapter 4)
2. experiential learning activities as part of the planning curriculum reflecting the activity continuum (Chapter 5)
3. instruments that can be used to assess student learning according to best practice in experiential learning (Chapter 5)
4. case studies that demonstrate how planning academics can improve their experiential learning practice and student learning outcomes (Chapter 5 and Toolkit).

**1.4: Project outcomes**

The project has resulted in the following outcomes:

1. baseline documentation of Australian and New Zealand planning schools’ experiential learning components and evaluation techniques (a survey of 18 programs)
2. improved understanding of the development, resourcing and evaluation of effective experiential learning opportunities in the participating planning schools
3. an accepted and consistent framework for academic standards and evaluation of experiential learning in Australian planning schools, including measurement techniques and instruments applied and tested by partner institutions to evaluate the effectiveness of practical learning experiences
4. establishment of an easily accessible package of professional development material of experiential learning activities and assessment techniques for improving teaching and learning outcomes provided digitally to all Australian and New Zealand planning schools
5. further development of both cross-institutional relationships among emerging Australian planning education programs involved in the research team and institution-practitioner partnerships with a focus on experiential learning
6. an ongoing legacy of EL pedagogy and practical tools across the planning professions and Australian and New Zealand Planning Schools, through the dissemination of the research results and the framework through newsletters,
an online toolkit, workshops, conferences and academic papers. This includes workshops or papers at the annual Australian and New Zealand Planning Schools (ANZAPS) conferences in 2011, 2012 and 2013, PIA conferences and workshops with universities.

7. engagement of key stakeholders from the beginning of the project, including exchange with PIA national and state education committees and Planning Program Industry Advisory Committees.

1.5: Links to ALTC-funded projects

Development of the project was informed by completed Australian Learning and Teaching Council (ALTC) projects (Barraket et al., 2009; Jones et al., 2009a; Owen and Stupans, 2009; Savage et al., 2010; Zehner et al., 2010; Broomhall et al., 2010; Billett, 2011), and research (Freestone et al., 2007; Coiacetto, 2008) about effective experiential learning curriculum and assessment. The findings of this project build on previous research (Eyler et al., 1999; Coiacetto, 2008; Billett, 2011) which demonstrated the benefits of experiential learning, including: positive social, personal and learning outcomes for students; improved skill development; enhanced relationships between students, faculties and community; and improved student retention rates.

This project strategically builds on a need for better practices identified in these studies, namely:

- designing specific programs which include not just planning programs, but other professional programs
- obtaining institutional support
- improving graduates’ interpersonal skills and capacity for critical thinking and lifelong learning
- aligning academic and professional values and expectations through stakeholder engagement and higher standards.

Previous ALTC-funded projects confirmed that ‘practice-based learning exchanges' are highly valued by both staff and students alike. Such exchanges have the potential to achieve positive outcomes for students such as: greater understanding of their discipline; development of higher order generic skills; creation of nurturing professional relationships; enhanced graduate employability (Barraket et al., 2009, Billett, 2011); and increased self-confidence. This project builds on recommendations by the ALTC Built Environment and Design discipline leader about strategies to improve the transition-to-work (Savage et al., 2010).

Concurrent and/or newly-completed OLT projects also link with the experiential learning themes of this project. Specifically with regard to the case of simulations, Newton et al. (2013) devise, test and demonstrate the potential of interactive virtual reality simulation environments in teaching architecture and building. Project work is at the focus of the development of curricula to foster collaborative work practice amongst architecture, engineering and construction professionals (Mills et al., 2013).
The advocacy of this project team – and that of others – for experiential/practice-based learning, however, takes place in a context where pressure to move in the opposite direction is happening in other disciplines. For example, Harrison (2014, p. 4) seeks to find a new scholarly relationship between supervisor and Research Higher Degree student in the music conservatorium where education ‘still tends to privilege practice, performance and virtuosity, sometimes at the expense of scholarly-based approaches to learning and teaching’. This study and others should interest and sound notes of caution for music educators and others seeking to stray too far from their practice foundations.

This project is also important because it provides the necessary cross-institutional support to improve assessment literacy of academic staff, an issue highlighted as essential by Jones et al. (2009a). Likewise, it builds on their conclusions by providing resources to support an identified need for work-integrated learning (WIL) activities in achieving 'fitness to practice' in accord with the requirements of professional accrediting bodies (Jones et al., 2009b). The additional demands on the faculty in implementing such approaches in courses have also been identified by Jones et al. (2009a; 2009b) in an ALTC-funded project on developing academic standards for work-integrated learning in planning, and are supported by other research (Freestone and Wood, 2006; Steiner and Posch, 2006).

Jones et al. (2009a) refer to a continuum of practice exposure experiences ranging from predominantly university-based to predominantly workplace-based learning that occurs in planning institutions across Australia (see Chapter 2). The continuum reflects the level of university ‘control’ over the curriculum and learning experience. In the Jones et al. (2009a) review of 43 PIA-accredited planning degrees in Australia, 11 undergraduate qualifications containing a form of work practice were investigated in greater depth. The need for revised academic standards and assessment practices (Jones et al., 2009b) was identified, along with certain principles to guide the enhancement of assessment practices and academic standards. These principles have been further developed by Rosier and Baldwin (submitted) and are included in Table 2.2 in Chapter 2. Key points of difference from this research are that Jones et al. (2009a), as well as Freestone et al. (2007) focused on work-based learning (WBL), rather than a wider range of experiential learning activities within the continuum.

1.6: This Report

Chapter 2 outlines the theoretical underpinnings of experiential learning and the framework adopted as a basis for this project. Methods for the study are outlined in Chapter 3, which include a baseline survey of Australian and New Zealand (ANZ) planning schools' application of experiential learning activities in planning courses, and testing the framework of principles in genuine experiential learning activities/courses conducted at the five participating universities which were written up as case studies. Chapters 4 and 5 provide results of applying these methods. Chapter 6 includes recommendations arising from the project for potential changes to the PIA accreditation policy so as to embed experiential learning in planning education. Chapter 7 describes the dissemination activities undertaken as part of the project. Chapter 8 reflects on the insights gained from the EL project in the context of the aims outlined above.
An evaluation of the project comprises Chapter 9 and a discussion of conclusions makes up the final chapter. Most importantly, while this report provides a comprehensive account of project findings, these outcomes are easily accessible in the online toolkit that has been developed to provide guidance on experiential learning in planning. See experientiallearninginplanning.com.au/
Chapter 2: Theoretical basis for experiential learning

If you tell me, I will listen. If you show me, I will see. If you let me experience, I will learn.
Lao-Tse, 5th Century BC

While the intent of experiential learning in planning education is to improve student transition to ‘real world’ tasks, it is important to build on the theoretical knowledge and skills learnt during the degree course and foster critical learning as students experience increasingly complex social and political situations. This chapter explores the theoretical basis for the development of experiential learning from seminal literature such as those of Kolb, Vygotsky and Freire. It defines experiential learning as used in this project and synthesises, from the literature, a set of eight experiential learning principles for promoting and enhancing experiential learning experiences at a tertiary education level. The chapter then discusses EL approaches to assessment and the constructive alignment of assessment with course learning outcomes and program graduate attributes.

The last section focuses on the application of experiential learning to core planning knowledge and skills needed by urban and regional planning graduates. This theoretical background provides the basis for a toolkit to improve planning school teaching and learning practice, and to influence and improve the planning school accreditation criteria.

There are many ways to assess the effectiveness of experiential learning by planning graduates. These include applying a consistent framework for planning school accreditation, as well as positioning planning educators to improve courses and meet the demand for the use of new technologies as part of the educational experience.

2.1: Theoretical basis for experiential learning

Experiential Learning: Definition and characteristics

Two main areas of literature inform this project: what constitutes ‘experiential learning’; and principles to guide the development of experiential learning activities in a tertiary learning context. Reviews of benchmarking systems for assessing university planning education programs recommend richer measurement schemes that go beyond faculty characteristics, numbers of students, measures of student satisfaction and research output, to provide evidence of linking theory to practice (Biggs and Tang, 2007; Stiftel et al., 2009). In fact, Stiftel et al. (2009) challenge planning educators in particular to develop credible yardsticks of performance that reflect multiple objectives including design and outreach.

The project draws from work by prominent researchers: Vygotsky (1978) credited with providing the foundations for situated cognition, and Kolb (1984 p. 38) who best articulated experiential learning, stating that ‘knowledge is created through the transformation of experience’.
**What is experiential learning?**

Experiential learning is ‘a purposeful process of engaged, active learning in which the student constructs knowledge, skills, or values by means of direct experiences in authentic, real world contexts’ (Kassem, 2007, p. 2). It puts the learner into the centre of their learning and involves self-regulation of the learning experience (Kottilil, 2009). Scholars often credit Vygotsky (1978) with providing the foundations for situated cognition (now experiential learning) when he argued that knowing, understanding and thinking happen in socio-cultural contexts (Lave and Wenger 1991).

**Kolb’s Theory of Experiential Learning**

The project draws from work by prominent researchers, Vygotsky (1978) credited with providing the foundations for situated cognition, and Kolb (1984, p. 38) who best articulated experiential learning, stating that ‘knowledge is created through the transformation of experience’.

Kolb (1984) explored the processes associated with making sense of concrete experiences – and the different styles of learning that may be involved. While he acknowledges previous educational theorists (e.g. Dewey, Piaget), Kolb is credited with a model which has had a profound impact on the design and development of approaches to lifelong learning. He argued that ‘learning is best conceived as the process whereby knowledge is created through a transformation of experience’ (Kolb, 1984, p. 38; Ya-Sui 2011). This definition emphasises certain critical aspects. Learning is a process, rather than an outcome, grounded in experience and linked to the personality of the user. It is transformative, with knowledge being continuously created and recreated, requiring resolution of opposed modes of perceiving and holistic adaptation to the real world. It involves transactions between the learners and their environments, interpreting experience in both objective and subjective forms.

Kolb and Fry (1975) argue that the experiential learning circle (Figure 2.1 below) could be entered at any point. Others suggest that some steps may be skipped completely (similar to Dewey 1933) or that learning is most effective when a student goes through all roles regardless of ‘order’ (Kotval, 2003).

![Figure 2.1: Kolb’s Experiential Learning Circle. Adapted from Smith (2001) and Kolb (1984)](image-url)
Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning circle thus points to four types of learning processes:

- the concrete experience – emotional and sensory experience in doing some activity
- reflective observation – watching, listening, discussing, understanding experiences
- abstract conceptualisation – integrating theories and concepts into the overall learning process. This is the in-depth thinking phase of the cycle.
- active experimentation – the doing phase. Engage in an experimental process to suggest and evaluate solutions.

The last step is critical – generalising the knowledge for application when acting in a new situation. It relies on concrete experiences to test ideas and the use of feedback to change current practice and theory.

This model is considered useful for educators because learners are offered time to reflect upon and process their individual concrete experiences. However, the inherent complexity of working with people and the inappropriate use of set formulas mean that ‘experiential learning is certainly not easy’ (Beard, 2010, p. 3).

With regard to the purpose of this project, these concepts contribute to principles for establishing experiential learning as part of a tertiary education program. Kolb’s model also contributes to criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of experiential learning in the planning discipline, which includes understanding whether, or how, new knowledge is generalised, then how it is applied in a new situation. Developed in parallel, and also derived from Vygotsky (1978), is the concept of ‘social learning’, through which people learn from each other. Social learning theory requires people to approach learning in a certain way through observation. If successful, learners retain information (remembering the observation), reproduce information (ability to replicate the behaviour), and are motivated to demonstrate what they have learned and to adopt the behaviour (Bandura, 1977).

Applying the social learning concept, like the application of experiential learning, reinforces the importance of processes which contribute to learning: the need for insightful preparation of the student, and encouraging students to particularly seek out and identify certain behaviours or situations relevant to their existing knowledge. It suggests the value of recording observations, for example in a journal. It argues for the student to be given the opportunity to model what they have learned theoretically in a real life example.

Interpretation of social learning-based educational theory (a behavioural model of learning) also contributes to our experiential learning framework. Freire (1995) emphasises dialogue-based transformation developing an individual’s consciousness to create action that is informed and values-based. This should improve the quality of a learning experience and methods for assessing student learning: using dialogue to create awareness, to reflect and to assess the implications, before and after applying an experiential activity.
This sentiment also challenges us to ensure that future education through e-learning or blended learning provides sufficient dialogue to support reflection and changed understanding.

Kolb’s learning cycle and other education theories contribute to the framework and principles that guide ‘good practice’ experiential learning as part of a tertiary education program. Social learning enhances EL through observation, motivation and replication of desired learnings and actions. In addition, this project has developed a set of principles to guide learning through doing, often in association with others, and through real world contexts.

The principles for establishing an experiential learning situation guide design of experiential activities and clarify the type of assessment needed. From experiential learning literature and case studies of such experiences, the project team identified the eight principles in Table 2.1 as a basis for establishing and assessing the effectiveness of individual experiential activities, as well as evaluating tertiary planning education programs. Many of these principles are derived from and are common to other reviews of experiential learning (e.g. Coulson & Harvey, 2013) and processes for assessing the workplace learning experiences of students (Freestone et al. 2007; Biggs and Tang, 2007). The team suggests that the first two principles, 'purposeful' and 'student-centred', along with 'evaluation' (principle 7), are not unique to experiential learning, but are good practice for teaching and learning in general. The remainder of the principles are of particular relevance to experiential learning.

Theoretical concepts which contribute to these principles for establishing experiential learning as part of a tertiary planning education program also form the basis of the criteria for evaluating the effectiveness of experiential learning in the planning discipline. These include assessment of whether, or how, new knowledge is generalised, how it is applied in a new situation, and how it is informed by the experiential learning circle (Kolb, 1984; Kolb & Fry, 1975; Smith, 2001).

Drawing on the literature review and pilot project undertaken by Baldwin and Rosier (2009), this project is based on a proposed framework which differentiates between two tasks: 1) how to assess the student’s learning, and 2) how to assess whether experiential learning is meeting the objectives of the planning program. Accordingly, the proposed framework is effectively conceptualised as a continuum (or a spectrum of learning experiences), and a set of principles derived from research and review (Coulson & Harvey, 2013; Freestone et al., 2007).

The principles were refined in collaboration with the project team (discussed in more detail in Chapter 6). Examples of learning activities and assessment instruments were developed and tested in conjunction with university partners (Chapter 5). This approach is supported by findings of an ALTC-funded project by Owen and Stupans (2009) which identified the importance of planning and scaffolding of learning related to competency and other outcomes, including relevant assessment tasks and explicit criteria based on graduated descriptors.
Table 2.1: Principles to be applied across the continuum of experiential learning

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principle</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Purposeful</strong></td>
<td>Clear goals, the purpose and expectations of the experiential activity need to be explained, within the context or program requirements (Coulson &amp; Harvey, 2013, Jones et al., 2009a).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Student-centred</strong></td>
<td>Each year, increased levels of complexity are built into the curriculum to extend student capacity for self-directed (or self-regulated) learning. A process of ‘active learning’ means the student takes an active role in formulating, negotiating, implementing, modifying and evaluating their own plan and taking action to achieve agreed goals (Coulson &amp; Harvey, 2013, Kassem, 2007; Jones et al., 2009a; Guile &amp; Griffiths, 2001).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Theory-practice dialectic</strong></td>
<td>The experience needs to build on and draw from the student’s existing understanding of planning concepts from coursework and offer sufficient breadth for generalisation beyond the environment of the learning experience (Quinn and Strauss 1997), and to inform theory from practice. Clear goals effectively link classroom and workplace learning and promote student reflection (Escott, 2004).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>The ‘real world’ context</strong></td>
<td>Students are increasingly exposed to real world situations over the four years of their degree course. Settings become less controlled by faculty, problems become more complex, and working with others is required much of the time (Coulson &amp; Harvey, 2013; Kassem, 2007). Transdisciplinary experiences featuring collaboration and active learning are relevant to broad skills and knowledge (Corey &amp; Motte, 2002; Steiner &amp; Posch, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Guided practice</strong></td>
<td>There is ongoing faculty involvement in all phases of the experiential learning process (Coulson &amp; Harvey, 2013; Kassem, 2007). Collaboration on learning needs and experience with both employers and students occurs (Freestone et al., 2007). Leadership from the educator facilitates real engagement with students and a reflexive ‘scholarship of teaching’ (Freestone &amp; Wood, 2006).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Reflection</strong></td>
<td>Reflection is essential to move beyond current understanding and to build professional competencies. It is core to experiential learning, as per Kolb’s model. Students need to think about their actions, why they do them, critically explore learning, what might be improved or done differently, how they use intuition and knowledge when learned rules of procedure do not readily fit a situation. (Jones et al., 2009a; Gunder, 2002). Reflective dialogue with the educator, practitioners and other students may improve the meaning and learning from an experience (Fowler, 2008; Roakes &amp; Norris-Tirrell, 2000; Freiere, 1975).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Evaluation</strong></td>
<td>Evaluation should demonstrate what the students learnt and how they are meeting their learning goals. Such ‘situated learning’ needs to be complemented with ‘situated assessment’ (Jones et al., 2009a) of student’s learning outcomes during and after the experience (Corso, 2008). Methods of evaluation could include papers or seminar presentations, site visits by faculty, self-reflective diaries and journals supported by evidence, as well as student focus groups and feedback from site supervisors (Coulson &amp; Harvey, 2013).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Community-university partnership</strong></td>
<td>A partnership between university and community organisations or industries should be mutually beneficial, facilitating the experiential learning needs of students, while students provide a needed resource, and contribute current knowledge with support of academics (Freestone et al., 2007; Kotval, 2003).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Developed from Baldwin and Rosier (2009)
Benefits of experiential learning

A range of positive outcomes has been attributed to experiential learning including: gains in self-esteem and interpersonal skills; career knowledge and competence; social responsibility and citizenship; and academic motivation and performance (Eyler et al., 2001; Beard, 2010). Documented benefits include positive social, personal and learning outcomes for students; enhanced relationships between students, faculties and community; and improved student retention rates (Eyler et al., 2001; Coffield et al., 2004; Biggs & Tang, 2007) and self-confidence (Biggs & Tang, 2007). A review of cooperative education (inherently developmental throughout a university program) found that outcomes for employers included cost-effective productivity and long-term recruitment, increased staff diversity, and access to sought-after skills, as well as an ability to provide input to the relevance of the school’s curricula (UW, 2005).

While the types of learning processes that produce success in higher education are still debated, learning models based on cognitive processes are usually considered more relevant in planning education. These models offer a learning process in which learners think, remember, form concepts tested in the real world, solve problems and demonstrate what they have learned in various ways (Coffield et al., 2004; Roakes & Norris-Tirrell, 2000).

Some educators (Race, 2007; Biggs & Tang, 2007) believe that the most important factors underpinning successful learning in higher education are ‘learning by doing’ combined with appropriate ‘authentic’ assessment (namely, assessment which is commensurate with the desired learning objective) of student activities and time for students to make sense of what they have learned. They argue that this can encourage a positive attitude to lifelong learning.

Consistent with Race (2007), this project is based on the assumption that students enrolled in professionally accredited planning programs recognise the role of industry in setting competency standards to be met before graduates enter into practice. The PIA, which accredits planning programs in Australia, assesses how well planning schools meet professional and disciplinary competency requirements. The PIA is also concerned with measuring how well students understand the needs of professional practice through work experience and other forms of work-integrated learning (PIA, 2010). Placements in which professional planners mentor students enable individual students to critique the philosophy of planning, ethics and power issues and the role of theory in guiding practice. In these terms, Biggs and Tang (2007) suggest that a successful practicum has greater validity if it occurs as close as possible to the student’s entering the profession.

The PIA 2004 National Inquiry into Planning Education and Employment recommended increasing planner professionalism through matching skill gaps with training in areas such as project management and negotiation. Many of the attributes of planning graduates desired by prospective employers such as communication, teamwork, critical thinking skills, collaboration and managing networks are refined through application in real situations (Seltzer & Ozawa, 2002; Booher & Innes, 2002; Biggs & Tang, 2007). This reinforces the importance of processes which contribute to learning: the need for insightful preparation of the student prior to being sent out
into the work place; and encouraging students to particularly seek out and identify certain behaviours or situations relevant to their existing knowledge. It suggests the value of recording observations in a journal and argues for the student to be given the opportunity to model what they have learned across the program in a real life example.

Some research demonstrates the linkage between Kolb’s learning styles and student learning preferences: Loo’s (2004) analysis demonstrates that, for all learning styles, students prefer doing practical projects, solving problems and participating in groups over writing long papers, giving presentations and doing library-based research. This preference is discussed further in Chapter 8 because these findings are not entirely consistent with feedback from some of the case studies. Those results suggest that educators should use a variety of learning methods that emphasise different ways of understanding rather than trying to link learning methods to an overall learning style, as noted by Roakes and Norris-Tirrell (2000).

Jones et al. (2009a) and Stubbs and Keeping (2002) specifically identify the need for assessment practices and academic standards for planning practice education other than structured work placement. Stubbs and Keeping (2002) also identify ground rules for the use of experiential learning in planning programs, including the need to give precedence to student-centred learning over content. They also believe that emphasis should be given to forms of structured preplanned practical work within the university’s controlled environment, and that each course designer needs a clear idea about the intended outcomes and structure of the course (Stubbs & Keeping, 2002, p. 208). These approaches provide the basis for a framework for guiding experiential learning processes.

**How experiential learning works to facilitate student learning in higher education**

Higher education teaching and learning is based on constructivism which emphasises:

that the learners construct knowledge with their own activities, building on what they already know. Teaching is not a matter of transmitting but of engaging students in active learning, building their knowledge in terms of what they already understand (Biggs & Tang, 2007, p. 21),

making it important that learning activities align with desired outcomes of conceptual change.

The adoption of experiential learning principles as a teaching philosophy or pedagogical epistemology provides the basis for consistent pathway towards ‘deep’ student learning. These foundational EL principles are then applied to discipline-specific content (in this case, planning education) required and expressed in the curriculum. The constructive alignment model, commonly used in higher education contexts, then operationalises the principles and content into a trilogy of intended learning outcomes (ILOs), teaching and learning activities (TLAs), and assessment tasks (ATs). The process culminates in enhanced opportunities for transformational change to take place in student learning. Without this aligned approach, experiential learning activities may be just ‘add on’ activities which prove ineffectual.
2.2: Application of experiential learning to Planning education

There is growing evidence that higher education graduates benefit from the incorporation of experiential learning into curricula and programs, particularly in applied fields of education, urban and regional planning, nursing, teaching, social work, pharmacy, engineering and management (Owen & Stupa, 2009; Fowler, 2008; Davis, 2006; Elwood, 2004; Trigwell & Reid, 1998). Driving this trend is the need to foster lifelong learning behaviour through continuing professional development, to facilitate adaptation to rapidly changing work environments (Guile & Griffiths, 2001). That the complexity and uncertainty encountered in practice situations cannot be fully duplicated in a traditional classroom education (Roakes & Norris-Tirrell, 2000) is increasingly apparent. Whatever its form, name or extent – virtual, service, practice, outreach, engagement, ‘co-op’erative education, or workplace learning – experiential learning is seen as a means to broaden students’ learning experiences by placing them in a new context for learning, in and from the world outside the university in their chosen professions.

Current approaches to experiential learning in Australian Planning Schools

Jones et al. (2009a) refer to a continuum of professional learning that, in some cases, is planning practice-based education or an experience in which the student has exposure to practice ranging from the predominantly university-based to the predominantly workplace-based that occurs in planning institutions across Australia. The continuum reflects the level of university ‘control’ over the curriculum and learning experience (Table 2.2 below). In the authors’ review of 43 PIA-accredited planning programs in Australia, 11 undergraduate programs containing a form of work practice were investigated in greater depth. Jones et al. (2009a) identified principles to guide the enhancement of assessment practices and academic standards, which inform the principles in Table 2.2.

Jones et al. (2009a) and Freestone et al. (2007) focus on work placements as an educational activity. There is little current evidence about the full range of practical education across the continuum within a formal university context. In fact, Jones et al. (2009a) recommended that a widely shared common assessment framework adopted by both the professional accrediting body (PIA) and/or planning schools is crucial.

The Table 2.2 continuum suggests that student exposure to the external world should increase in intensity during the four-year program: predominantly university-based activities should not be restricted to earlier years, or predominantly work-based experiences to the later years. In fact, activities such as ‘brief encounters' have a role throughout all years of a planning program. In general, it is accepted that students benefit from exposure to professional experience at any time in their program.
Table 2.2: Continuum of experiential learning experiences in planning programs in Australia (adapted from Jones et al. 2009a; Freestone and Wood 2006)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Predominantly university -based</th>
<th>Predominantly workplace –based</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Brief encounters</td>
<td>Applied project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest speakers</td>
<td>Track development application of Council. Moot or Appeal simulation or role play in law or conflict resolution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Given this continuum, a variety of activities could be delivered by educators. To illustrate this point, in Year One guest lecturers talk about their professional planning experience and use local case studies to illustrate basic theoretical ideas and concepts about spatial planning. Guest lecturers in later years may challenge the students more by engaging them in debates about professional issues. For example, guest lecturers may debate the implementation of ethical codes and ethical dilemmas faced by planners in practice in the planning theory and advanced planning practice courses.

In second year, students may work in groups simulating practice roles in planning. They may be designing a local place, simulating a development application process and writing reports or advice to ministers. This might be supported by guest lectures in specific topic areas which help students to understand the actual context in which such practice occurs. Formative feedback is given each week to groups enabling them to correct errors of fact and refine their ideas in the practical projects.

Third year students could complete role-play exercises as part of a participation and dispute resolution course. By third and fourth year, planning and other experts along with community representatives are providing input to ‘real life’ studios, often participating as the client in the final presentation of student work. Although studios are usually carried out in a university-controlled environment, they may be supported by field trips to the location where community representatives and others discuss planning issues in situ. Studios carried out in each year of a four-year Planning program usually build in complexity over the four years, reinforcing Thomas and Hollander’s (2010, 228) notion, supported by others, that studios offer five key benefits for student learning in a studio environment over lectures or seminars:

1. integration and synthesis of knowledge and skills (Schön, 1984; Dutton, 1987; Greene, 1988)
2. development of teamwork skills (Greene, 1988)
3. application of planning procedures to field example (Heumann & Wetmore, 1984)
4. improvement of problem-finding and problem-solving skills (Heumann & Wetmore, 1984; Greene, 1988)
5. provision of a ‘professional socialising experience’ (Heumann & Wetmore, 1984, p. 124).

The theoretical background provides the basis for the sharing of good practice case studies through an online toolkit to improve planning school teaching and learning practices, and to influence the planning school accreditation criteria. Experiential learning consists of a range of activities which may be developed across a four-year undergraduate planning program or a two-year postgraduate program.

**Experiential learning and constructive alignment**

Under the constructive alignment model, an experientially-based pedagogy expressed through purposeful learning activities should fit with the intended learning outcomes of a program, course or unit. Similarly, assessment needs to be authentic encouraging ‘deep’ learning (Biggs & Tang, 2007). According to Walsh (2007, p. 80) constructive alignment questions ‘What should the student be able to understand/perform at the end of the learning experience? What activities would the student have to undertake in order to learn this? And how can the tutor find out if the student has learned successfully?’

In order to answer these questions, there needs to be alignment between curriculum objectives and the pedagogical approach to facilitate TLAs and assessment. Appropriately aligned EL draws students into the use of higher cognitive skills which focus on application of theory to practice and reflection. The SOLO Taxonomy (see Figure 2.2) illustrates through the use of verbs this stepwise progression in learning in which students, over the course of their degree, can move towards the more abstract and complex skills required of graduate professionals.

**Figure 2.2: The Solo Taxonomy** (Biggs & Tang, 2007, p. 79)
Yet there can be discrepancies between the desired and actual learning levels (Biggs and Tang, 2007, p. 27; Hager, 2000; Brockbank et al., 2002 from Clements and Cord, 2011). According to Biggs and Tang (2007, p. 21), meaningful student learning requires conceptual change in addition to acquiring facts and figures. Such change takes place when:

1. the intended learning outcomes are clear to both students and teachers and they can all see the journey to get there
2. students are motivated to take the journey and get to the end
3. students are free to focus on the task because assessments are aligned with the intended outcomes
4. students work together and in dialogue with others, including the teachers and peers.

EL promotes a deep learning approach because of its ‘real-world’ orientation which focuses on dialectic transfer of theory into practice and vice versa, encouraging student engagement with learning tasks. Biggs and Tang (2007, pp. 24–25) suggest that, from the student side, deep learning is encouraged by ‘an intention to engage the task meaningfully and appropriately’; the possession of sufficient and relevant curiosity and prior knowledge; and an ability to focus and work at high conceptual levels. Educators should teach content explicitly towards intended learning outcomes and in a way that ‘elicit[s] an active response from students’ (ibid 2007 p25), based on existing student knowledge, addressing misconceptions and encouraging a supportive environment in which students can experiment, make mistakes and then learn from these experiences.

2.3: Assessment of student's experiential learning

To receive full recognition as pedagogy for higher education that enhances student learning and critical thinking, advocates of experiential learning argue that authentic assessment is needed to validate the learning experience. Specific tools are suggested for assessment such as: research projects, written essays, learning journals, protocols and interviews (Corso, 2008; Steinke, 2007; Simm, 2005) and for reflection, communication and evaluation for the student, teacher and workplace mentor (Hendricks, 1994; Boud & Walker, 1998; Brown, 2009; Beard, 2010; Biggs & Tang, 2007). However, it is also important to ensure that assessment of activities is aligned with the intended learning outcomes and graduate attributes.

Authentic assessment

Authentic assessment requires that consideration is given to the ‘nature of the subject matter, the goals of instruction, the individual proclivities and understandings of learnings and teachers, and the settings within which teaching and learning takes place’ (Darling-Hammon & Snyder, 2000, p. 524). Familiar assessment types ‘are insufficiently context sensitive to assess teaching that is effective for diverse learners’ (Ibid). Examples of types of assessment tools that value context include ‘cases, portfolios that assemble artefacts of practice, exhibitions of performance, and problem-based inquiries’. Under the umbrella of constructive alignment, a traditional classroom approach usually involves teaching facts from the expert, assessed through
decontextualised multiple choice or short answer questions that test ‘knowledge and low-level cognitive skill acquisition’ (Guilkers et al., 2004, p. 67).

However, it is not always easy to design authentic assessment when applying an EL approach. Walsh (2003, p. 84) identifies that the key criterion in deciding whether assessment is authentic, is whether functional professional knowledge is being used. As an alternative, Biggs and Tang (2007) focus on performance assessment (i.e. problem-solving, critical incident analysis). Some professional planners have commented that they would not provide in-depth evaluation of an intern/practicum student, especially if they have only been in the office for a short period (less than four weeks).

**Experiential learning and graduate attributes**

As discussed previously, learning outcomes for particular courses need to be mapped to program learning outcomes which are aligned with graduate attributes, as a requirement of the AQF (Australian Qualifications Framework Council, 2013.). Clements and Cord (2013) argue for alignment across learning outcomes to graduate attributes in EL. Graduate attributes provide ‘graduate qualities indicators’. ‘A primary challenge for higher education is the designing of learning outcomes and assessments that encourage the development of graduate qualities in the work-placement context’ (Ibid, pp. 1–2).

**Experiential learning and work-based learning**

The term ‘work-based learning’ describes the university programs that cooperate with work organisations to provide students with new workplace learning opportunities (Boud et al., 2001). These partnerships usually share the following characteristics:

- established formal learning arrangements between universities and work organisations
- negotiated individual learning plans by the learner, approved by the university and workplace
- the program outcomes stem from workplace and learner needs rather than being controlled by curriculum
- aspirational learning goals of the learner along with current knowledge and learner competency, determines the starting point of the experience
- learning takes place in the workplace context while supported by the organisation and the university
- the university assesses the student’s learning outcomes against a trans-disciplinary standards framework.

Work-based learning involves active participation of the student in the planning, development and execution of learning activities, is shaped by the problems and pressures arising from the real-world situation, and occurs most effectively outside the classroom.
Assessment of student’s experiential learning

Assessment can be categorised as formative or summative. Formative assessment facilitates evaluation of student knowledge in order to plan relevant future learning activities and to encourage improvement (Sambell et al., 2013). Summative assessment judges individual student achievements in order to measure progress beyond the program (Sambell et al., 2013). This process aligns with Earl’s (2003) conceptual explanation of ‘as’ learning. ‘As’ learning involves a process where ‘students, as active, engaged, and critical assessors, can make sense of information, relate it to prior knowledge, and master the skills involved’, grounded in reflective practice (Earl, 2003, p. 25). Self-motivation, monitoring and correction, facilitated by effective assessment, drive student learning and develop confidence in their ability to succeed (Earl, 2003).

While traditional assessment measures such as examinations measure this declarative knowledge, measures aligned with workplace functioning knowledge need to be ‘context sensitive’ (Darling-Hammon & Snyder, 2000, p. 525; Walsh, 2007). The focus of newer educational approaches to graduate attribute development and work readiness has shifted student learning towards developing competency, active learning, reflection, knowledge construction and contextualised, interpretive and performance-based assessment (Gulikers et al., 2004).

To receive full recognition as pedagogy for higher education that enhances student learning and critical thinking, advocates of experiential learning argue the importance of authentic assessment to validate the learning experience, as well as to ensure reflection and evaluation between the academics and workplace. Successful experiential learning approaches rely on assessment that involves the student in real world projects to develop skills and knowledge (Parkay, Anctil & Hass, 2006). These assessment types can be applied in different years and across courses within a program and include the need to access multiple sources of knowledge and the development of complexity across a professional program.

Authentic assessment provides opportunities to assess student ‘thinking and actions in situations that are experience-based and problem-oriented’ that involve elements of reflection (Darling-Hammond & Synder, 2000, p. 524). Examples of authentic assessment tools include ‘cases, portfolios that assemble artefacts of practice, exhibitions of performance, and problem-based inquiries’ which ‘allow the application of theoretical principles to problems in specific contexts while appropriately complicating efforts to draw generalisations about practice’ (Darling-Hammond & Synder, 2000, p. 524).

Assessments need to be flexible to encourage individual learning within different experiences, and to prepare a diverse student cohort to perform successfully in the workplace (Allin & Turnock, 2007). As the complexity of assessment increases the more students need to be interacting with others to provide support and different perspectives (Boud, 2000), enabling situated learning through a ‘more contextualised, participatory and relational assessment regime’ (Boud & Falchikov, 2006, p. 408). One of the most important elements for educators in developing effective assessment is an understanding of student progress and giving timely
feedback, which may be informal and formative (Kotval, 2003).

The most important contribution of this chapter is the set of experiential learning principles which is used to guide the design and evaluation of case studies in the subsequent chapters. The literature about links between the nature of experiential learning and the need for effective assessment is also reviewed, with emphasis on the alignment between learning activity tasks and authentic assessment which recognises that learning is contextualised within the regime established by the overall study program.
Chapter 3: Project processes and methods

This project explores the concept of experiential learning and its role in meeting new professional skills, and identifies the need to broaden the definition of experiential learning from its current focus, which is mainly on work experience. The project team has worked together from 2012 to mid-2014 to undertake a baseline survey of current EL practice, to prepare exemplar case-studies and to develop an online toolkit of ‘good practice’ resources. Wider dissemination presentations, workshops and seminars were conducted by project partners during 2014 (Table 3.1, Appendix E).

The university partners involved in the project communicated through four face-to-face workshops, several conference calls, and numerous individual calls and emails. An online project management tool, Basecamp, was managed by USC, and provided the means to share resources and communicate provisional findings amongst partners.

Table 3.1: Project phases

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phase</th>
<th>Purpose</th>
<th>Method</th>
<th>Time Frame</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Baseline survey of experiential learning in ANZ planning schools</td>
<td>Emailed survey of planning schools, Face-to-face workshop, Teleconference</td>
<td>Feb 2012 – April 2012, 30–31 March 2012, 28 October 2011</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Developing and testing of case studies against principles</td>
<td>Student surveys – EL tasks, Face-to-face workshop</td>
<td>Feb 2012 – June 2013, 31 Jan – 1 Feb 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Development of toolbox</td>
<td>Case studies, Face-to-face workshop</td>
<td>June – Sept 2013, 11–12 July 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Recommendations for programs and PIA accreditation</td>
<td>Analysis of outcomes of first 2 stages, Face-to-face workshop</td>
<td>July – Sept 2013</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Wider dissemination of project outcomes</td>
<td>Workshops, Seminars, Presentations</td>
<td>26 Sept 2013, See dissemination schedule, Appendix E</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Phase 1 – Baseline survey of experiential learning in ANZ planning schools

Following completion of the human ethics approval process (USC Ethics Approval No: A11348) Phase 1 involved a survey of all PIA-accredited planning programs across Australian universities and equivalent New Zealand planning schools to determine the current extent of experiential learning activities used in their planning programs. In addition to providing baseline documentation of EL, it was expected that the survey might identify innovative practices and, hence, provide material for developing the package of experiential learning activities.
The survey instrument was disseminated via email in two stages. The first stage involved a desktop search of all the university websites to identify heads of programs and all core courses’ and coordinators. An email invitation was sent to all these potential participants. To ensure further coverage of potential participants, a second email was sent later to the heads of these planning programs asking them to forward the survey to course coordinators who use experiential learning approaches. Further, each project team partner was allocated heads of programs to contact, requesting assistance; reminder phone calls were made, if a particular planning program did not respond. An explanation of the study was also posted on RePlan (Australian and New Zealand planning schools email network) with contact details for those who may not have been contacted and who wanted to complete a survey. (See Appendix B for a copy of a sample survey instrument.)

Planning educators from 18 of the 23 Australian programs and three of four New Zealand programs responded. Of their 100 course-level survey responses, 52 were received about courses offered solely as part of undergraduate degrees; 26 related to both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees; and 22 were postgraduate degrees. (See Chapter 4 for detailed survey results.)

Potential respondents were asked to describe their experiential learning activities and the nature of the assessment used in the course using the continuum of experiential learning experiences ranging from a variety of university-based through to workplace-based encounters. (See Chapter 2.)

The ten categories of learning activities used in the survey were:

1. guest speakers from the profession talking about practice
2. field trips to council, court, tribunal or development or heritage or conservation site
3. regional or international field studies and project
4. development or impact assessment e.g. track development application through council; undertake an assessment
5. studio-project-based work usually with a client and/or community
6. simulated development of project at a real site
7. strategic planning, usually for a client or at a real site e.g. master planned community or community strategy
8. role play e.g. negotiation, conflict resolution
9. informal work experience under supervision of planning professional combined with classroom discussion with peers and university staff e.g. one day/week or holiday work
10. formal work placement as course work under direction of a planning profession and university staff e.g. sandwich year, semesters or number of days.

The analysis of the survey and the results of the baseline survey are at Chapter 4.

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1 The term ‘course’ also refers to subjects, units or papers
Phase 2 – Developing and testing of case studies against principles
Following a second ethics approval process (USC Ethics Approval No: A12385), Phase 2 of the project required partner institutions to evaluate and refine a framework for experiential learning. In the 2009 pilot study at the University of the Sunshine Coast, brief questionnaire surveys were administered to planning students. Survey questions were designed around an initial statement of the principles to be applied across the continuum of experiential learning (referred to in Chapter 2) and also took into account instruments developed by Trigwell and Reid (1998) and the Work Experience Questionnaire (WEQ) intended to measure student satisfaction with workplace experience (Freestone et al. 2007). Each of the partner institutions represents expertise in a diversity of experiential learning activities and learning tasks including international field trips, role plays, and planning projects. Each partner refined curriculum materials (activities and assessment techniques). To evaluate the effectiveness of the course or task in meeting the principles, each partner surveyed students at the end of each course or experiential activity. An agreed generic qualitative survey was thus tailored by each of the research partners to fit the particular course and activity being assessed by the partner. (See Appendix C for a survey example.) Each partner analysed the completed surveys using content analysis and provided quotations from student respondents as evidence of the extent to which the course met experiential learning principles and satisfaction with the activity. Information obtained from the various survey instruments designed by partner universities formed the basis of the assessment of each case study written up in Phase 3.

Phase 3 – Development of toolbox
In Phase 3, project partners wrote one or more EL case studies based on the outcomes of Phase 2. The case studies document the learning task; what assessment was used; how the learning activity met the principles of EL; what feedback was obtained from students; and what unit coordinators would do differently next time. Where possible, case studies were supplemented with photos and videos. The case studies are discussed in Chapter 5 and Appendix D and also feature in the online toolkit at <experientiallearninginplanning.com.au>. All Australian and New Zealand planning schools have been invited to use the material and provide further feedback.

Phase 4 – Recommendations for programs and PIA accreditation
At the July 2013 workshop, project partners assessed each phase of the project to identify the key learning outcomes from each case study and to make a series of recommendations for PIA accreditation (Chapter 6). These recommendations were further discussed by the academics from tertiary planning schools who attended the ANZAPS conference in September 2013.

Phase 5 – Wider dissemination of project outcomes
In 2014, project team members engaged in presentations, workshops and seminars across Australia and New Zealand to present the project outcomes to planning educators, practitioners, university partners and other EL proponents.

Chapter 3 provides the methodology for undertaking the survey and subsequent case studies in Phases 1 and 2 of the study. Both phases contributed then to the development in Phases 3 and 4 of the toolbox of experiential learning activities and
recommendations about accreditation of planning programs. The final phase was the wider dissemination of project outcomes. The first main undertaking – the baseline survey – is presented in Chapter 4.
Chapter 4: Results of baseline survey of current experiential learning practice

4.1: Introduction

The baseline survey was undertaken to determine the current extent of experiential learning (EL) used in Australian university planning programs accredited by the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), as well as equivalent New Zealand planning programs. To the best knowledge of the project team, such a survey of EL has not previously been conducted in Australia or New Zealand. The methods used to conduct the survey are described in detail in Chapter 3. Below is outlined the results from the survey in two parts: (1) a description of the overall findings; and (2) more detailed results based on individual EL activity types. Throughout the chapter, three levels of reporting are used: universities, course coordinators and courses.

4.2: Overall findings

Survey response

Survey responses were received from 18 universities in total: 15 of 23 (with PIA accredited planning programs) universities in Australia and three of four (with comparable planning programs) in New Zealand universities; an overall survey response rate of 67 per cent as show in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: University survey response rate

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>Response</th>
<th>No response</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>New Zealand</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>18 (67%)</td>
<td>9 (33%)</td>
<td>27 (100%)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

From the 18 universities for which completed survey forms were received, a total of 52 course coordinators representing 100 different courses provided information on the type and nature of EL activities used in their planning programs. Of the 100 courses reported on by course coordinators, 52 were courses offered as part of undergraduate planning degrees, 26 were courses offered at both undergraduate and postgraduate level, and 22 were offered exclusively at postgraduate level (e.g. Graduate Diploma and Masters) as outlined in Table 4.2. University responses were coded randomly to ensure anonymity in the reporting of results.

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2 The term ‘course’ is used in this report to also refer to ‘unit’ or ‘paper’ (NZ), meaning the discrete subjects that make up a degree.

3 Two respondents completed the survey for entire programs (containing multiple courses). Where appropriate in the reporting of results, these responses have been treated as individual courses. Where the same course was reported on more than once by different course coordinators (as happened for four courses), the survey responses have been combined together.

4 For example, some survey respondents completed one survey form for a course offered as part of both undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. In these cases, it has not been possible to distinguish between undergraduate and postgraduate level learning activities and associated assessment tasks.
Table 4.2: University, course coordinators and courses reported in survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>University code number</th>
<th>Course coordinators (survey respondents)</th>
<th>Courses</th>
<th>Courses reported by degree type</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Total (18) 52 100 52 26 22

Use of experiential learning

All 18 universities for which completed surveys were received, use some form of EL activity across their programs. It was not possible to determine the extent to which the nine universities that did not respond use EL approaches. Fifty of the 52 course coordinators who provided completed survey forms were using some form of EL in their teaching. It is likely that course coordinators familiar with EL approaches, or using EL activities, were more prepared to respond to the survey than those who were not. Certainly, at the level of universities, there was significant variation in the number of courses reported as using EL. Figure 4. below displays the number of courses using EL at each of the 18 universities (displayed by degree type). Fourteen universities (78 per cent) were using EL in six or fewer courses, while four universities (22 per cent) were using EL in 10 or more courses. One university (code number 8) reported using EL in 18 courses.
Of 100 courses EL was present in 97, with only three courses not containing any form of EL. Information about the type and nature of the EL in use was obtained from completed survey forms. Participants provided information by writing about their use of EL according to 10 pre-defined categories of EL activity types (see Appendix B for example of survey instruments), such as:

- guest speakers from the profession talking about practice
- field trip to council, court/tribunal or development/heritage/conservation site
- track development application through council
- role play (e.g. negotiation, conflict resolution).

There was substantial variation in the level of detail provided in completed survey forms. Survey respondents also appeared to differ in their understanding and, hence, selection of the categories used to report EL. In instances of missing information or ambiguity in response, attempts were made to source supplementary information through follow-up emails and phone calls with survey participants, as well as information gleaned from university web sites and course description documents. From these various sources it was possible to categorise the use of EL into 10 revised EL activity types below and to identify a total of 279 individual EL activities. As an average of EL activities per course, slightly more EL activities were used at postgraduate level (3.0) compared with undergraduate level (2.8) as shown in

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5 Where a survey respondent gave information on the use of EL under one activity type, but it was obvious that their use of EL also involved other activity types, these were also counted. For example, a survey respondent reported on an exercise under the category of 'Work for a Client', but as part of this activity students acted as a consulting team, involving such things as the preparation of a tender in response to the client’s brief. This was also counted as an instance of the ‘Role Play’ activity type. Indeed, as is noted below, the clustering of EL activities was one finding from the survey.
Table 4.3 below.
Table 4.3: Average number of EL activities by degree type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Degree type</th>
<th>Course survey responses</th>
<th>Total number of EL activities</th>
<th>Average number EL activities per course</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>52</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Undergraduate and postgraduate</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>69</td>
<td>2.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>65</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

EL activities and course type

In order to investigate patterns between the use of EL and the type of course, the 100 courses were subsequently categorised and grouped by subject matter based on the course title provided by survey participants and further course descriptions obtained from university websites. The most commonly reported courses focused on Planning and Environment (17 courses), Planning Practice (15 courses), Planning and Communities (14 courses), Planning and Development (12 courses) and Urban Planning (9 courses) as shown in Table 4.4.

Table 4.4: Average number of EL activities by course type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Course Type</th>
<th>Number of courses</th>
<th>Number of courses by degree type</th>
<th>Total number of EL activities</th>
<th>Average number of EL activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Environment</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>6/5</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Practice</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>12/12</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Community</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>7/2</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>2.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Development</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>6/5</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Planning</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>8/0</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>2.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Law</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2/3</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Urban Design</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>5/1</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>4.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Research</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1/2</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>1.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Theory</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2/1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>2.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning &amp; Health</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Planning Foundations</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural/Regional Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Statutory Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0/2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transport Planning</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2/0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>4.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>N/A (Entire programs)</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>7.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Heritage Planning</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1/0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>International Field Trip</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0/1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>52/26</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>2.8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The average number of EL activity for each course type is also displayed in Figure 4.1. The lowest averages were for Heritage Planning (1.0), Strategic Planning (1.5), Planning Research (1.8), and Planning Law (1.8). The highest averages were for Transport Planning (4.5), Planning Foundations (4.5), Urban Design (4.0) and Rural/Regional Planning (3.5).

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6 While course categories are derived from real course titles, the groupings reflect subjective understandings of a course’s foci. Hence, the results should be interpreted as indicative rather than representative of any broad trends or patterns.

7 The highest average (7.5) shown in Table 4.4 and Figure 4.2 reflects the reporting of entire programs rather than individual courses.
As noted above, course coordinators were asked to document their use of EL according to EL activity types provided to them. The results are displayed in Table 4.5. (Please see Part 2 of this chapter for detailed descriptions of individual EL activity types.)

### Table 4.5: Use of EL activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL activity type</th>
<th>Number of courses using activity by degree type</th>
<th>Total number of courses using activity</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
<td>Undergraduate &amp; Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guest speaker</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulated development</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio project-based</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on project for client</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track Development Application</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional/international field studies</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other EL activity</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total EL activities</td>
<td>145</td>
<td>69</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most widely used EL activity was ‘guest speakers’, used in 82 of the 100 courses surveyed. In other courses, learning activities organised around simulated developments and field trips were also popular, used in 43 and 41 courses respectively. Project-based studios and role play exercises were used in 23 courses; work on project for a client were used in 20 courses; formal work experience were used in 12 courses; tracked development applications were used in 11 courses; and regional/international field trips were used in eight courses. Survey respondents also nominated 16 other EL activities (many of them related to different uses of ‘case studies’) that did not fit easily into the pre-defined categories.


EL and assessment

The baseline survey also collected information from course coordinators on whether or not EL activities were linked to assessment, and if so, what form of evaluation (formative, graded or pass/fail) and what type of assessment (e.g. assignment, exam, oral presentation) were used. Information about assessment types and the form of evaluation varied significantly on completed survey forms. Some respondents provided a very high level of detail, often including copies of course guides that detailed individual assessment tasks and their links to discrete EL activities. Other respondents provided very little, if any, information about assessment. Where possible, additional information was sought from university websites and via follow-up contact with survey participants; however, given the difficulties involved in the collection of this data, the results should be interpreted as indicative of broad trends. While guest speakers and field trips were popular EL activities, they were often not linked to assessment. By comparison, the other EL activities identified were generally highly linked to some form of assessment as shown in Figure 4.3 below.

![Figure 4.3: Courses using EL activity and EL activity linked to assessment](image)

Figure 4.3 summarises the results for the form of evaluation used in different EL activities. As might be expected, graded forms of assessment are dominant in seven of the ten EL activity types. Formative assessment was used most extensively in guest lectures and field trips, the EL activity types found to be the least linked to assessment overall. Hurdle, or ‘pass/fail’ assessment was used in a significant proportion of work experience tasks and, to a minor extent, in field trips and simulated development activities.
Table 4.6 below displays the survey results for the method of evaluation and type of assessment. Only those assessment types that were nominated more than once were included in the table, and the order of assessment types reflects their popularity (e.g. ‘assignment/essay/report’ was the most popular form of assessment used with guest speakers). The detailed information presented in this table is discussed further under individual EL activity types in part 2 of this chapter.

Within each of the three categories of evaluation, the types of assessment are listed in order of frequency from most to least used.
Table 4.6: EL activity, evaluation method and assessment type

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL Activity</th>
<th>No. of courses using EL activity</th>
<th>No. of courses in which EL activity linked to assessment</th>
<th>Formative assessment</th>
<th>Graded assessment</th>
<th>Pass/Fail assessment</th>
<th>N/A*</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guest speaker</td>
<td>82</td>
<td>33</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project (group &amp; individual)</td>
<td>Project (group &amp; individual)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulated development</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>43</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>37</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project (individual)</td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td>Design concept</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip</td>
<td>41</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project (group &amp; individual)</td>
<td>Site analysis/field journal</td>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Site analysis/field journal</td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio project-based</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project (individual)</td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

* For some courses it was not possible to determine the assessment evaluation method or type as this information was either not supplied with the completed survey form or was not available on university web sites.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL Activity</th>
<th>No. of courses using EL activity</th>
<th>No. of courses in which EL activity linked to assessment</th>
<th>Formative assessment</th>
<th>Graded assessment</th>
<th>Pass/Fail assessment</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Role play</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work on project for client</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work experience</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- Formative assessment:
  - Reflection
  - Oral presentation
  - Design concept
  - Project (group & individual)
  - Portfolio

- Graded assessment:
  - Oral presentation
  - Assignment/essay/report
  - Reflection

- Pass/Fail assessment:
  - Oral presentation
  - Assignment/essay/report
  - Oral presentation

  - Supervisor assessment
  - Reflection
  - Work Journal
  - Portfolio
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>EL Activity</th>
<th>No. of courses using EL activity</th>
<th>No. of courses in which EL activity linked to assessment</th>
<th>Formative assessment</th>
<th>Graded assessment</th>
<th>Pass/Fail assessment</th>
<th>N/A</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Track development application</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<td></td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional / International field studies</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Project (group &amp; individual)</td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other EL Activity</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>13</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Case study</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Assignment/essay/report</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Oral presentation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>279</td>
<td>209</td>
<td>48</td>
<td>142</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4.2: Individual experiential learning activity types

Guest speaker

Overall statistics

- Used in 82 courses
- Undergraduate (43), undergraduate/postgraduate (20) and postgraduate (19)
- Assessed in 33 courses
- Evaluation methods: formative (27); graded (6)
- Assessment types: assignment/essay/report; project; exam; oral presentation; online discussion posts

How are guest presentations structured?

Besides the popular use of invited individual guest presenters, some courses use guest lecture panels or occasionally involve a practitioner co-teaching a course. This has a snowballing effect when the practitioner invites other guest presenters from their circle of colleagues to participate as well. Other contexts include a practitioner participating in workshops, mentoring or guiding students in their project assessment tasks, or professionals attending, reviewing and giving feedback on final project presentations.

What are the guest presenters talking about?

Two main themes were reported in guest presentations. Firstly, guest presentations were used to provide students with information about the transition from university to work. Activities included practitioners talking about a day in the life of a planner, recent graduates sharing their experiences about transitioning from university to practice, or an induction session before going on placement. Guests shared their expectations and responsibilities at work and regarding professional ethics. Guests also talked about career planning, how they arrived in their current role, being a reflective planner, writing a résumé, responding to employment selection criteria, planning for interviews and understanding human behaviour and personality types in management.

Secondly, guest presenters often refer to their personal professional experience using storytelling and case studies to discuss a wide variety of planning issues from the influence of planning theory on practice, statutory planning, development and impact assessment to strategic rural planning, liveable communities, facilitation, affordable housing, and health and Indigenous issues. The benefit of regular guest presentations is explained by one course coordinator:

- Arborist
- Arts specialists
- Biodiversity specialists
- Economic development
- Human services
- Indigenous practitioners/agencies
- Land/property development
- Planning lawyer and judiciary members
- Potential employers
- Regional planning
- Statutory, strategic, development assessment, transport planning
- Vegetation management
Regular guest speakers from industry contribute to understanding how traditional project management theory does not necessarily fit the nature of planning processes.

Guest presenters come from local and state government, private planning and development practice, tribunals, and not-for-profit organisations such as community groups/service organisations, environmental or affordable housing, or the Planning Institute of Australia. They also include academics with other specialties and recent graduates.

*How was assessment used in conjunction with the guest presentations?*

Guest presentations are the least assessed of all experiential learning activities surveyed, with only 33 courses having the activity contribute in any way to assessment. Most often (27 courses) guest presentations contributed formatively towards future assessment tasks. Six courses reported the inclusion of guest presentations in graded assessment tasks. Overall, assessment types used include assignments, essays, group and individual reports and projects, with two references to online discussion posts and reflection. One course coordinator explained:

> It is expected that students refer to learning in online discussion posts and that a critical understanding of the complexity of environmental and social policy is reflected in their research project.

The case studies on guest presentations expand on how they contributed and discuss possible forms of assessment. (See Appendix F.)

**Field Trip**

*Overall statistics*

- Used in 41 courses
- Undergraduate (23), undergraduate/postgraduate (9) and postgraduate (9)
- Assessed in 28 courses
- Evaluation methods: formative (13); graded (11); pass/fail (4)
- Assessment types: site analysis; plan; journal; assignment/essay/report; project; oral presentation

*What types of field trips are undertaken?*

The most common purpose of a field trip was site analysis. Coordinators of nine courses conducted field trips to examine development and redevelopment authority areas and, to a lesser degree, heritage, environmental impacts and place-making projects. Two respondents specifically identified local government project sites, sometimes with input from various stakeholder groups. The next most popular field trip, with seven specific responses, was court-focused: council hearings, state administrative tribunal visits, and mock appeals in courts, sometimes with ‘real’ panel experts hearing the cases. Six respondents mentioned field trips either to towns, urban fringe areas, inner city sites, activity centres and transit-oriented development (TOD) as well as cross-border planning issues. Other activities included walkability audits,
public transport critiques, and Indigenous, remote and environmental fieldwork.

For example, two respondents shared how they used field trips in their courses:

- Field trip relates to the studio project; students undertake a site analysis with group presentation on SWOT analysis of site (pass/fail). This analysis is also included in their final assessment: a formal planning report (graded).
- Field trip to sites to talk with 4-5 experts on a theme to demonstrate complexity of environmental and social policy – changes each year. It is expected that students refer to learning in online-discussion posts and critical understanding of complexity of environmental and social policy is reflective in their research project but not graded.

**How was assessment used with field trips?**

Respondents noted that field trips are either directly assessed or contribute to a later assessment piece. Identified direct assessment focused on group and individual oral presentations to external experts which were evaluated using graded or pass/fail evaluation methods. Participation in field trips in one course was compulsory and, therefore, it was considered a hurdle task worth 10 per cent of total marks. Field trips also contributed to future assessment tasks, particularly written tasks such as formal reports or, less commonly, a reflective field journal. One course graded the assignment but used a voluntary presentation of the final assignment on the local site to local government planners, an activity that was favoured by students for meeting with potential employers.

**Track Development Application**

**Overall statistics**

- Used in 11 courses
- Undergraduate (5), undergraduate/postgraduate (2) and postgraduate (4)
- Assessed in 10 courses
- Evaluation methods: graded (9); pass/fail (1)
- Assessment types: assignment; group or individual report

**What methods were used?**

This type of activity was only used by a small proportion of survey respondents. Respondents reported a number of ways that students were involved in development assessment. For example, they might track a development application process for a specific project. Three courses require students to write a development assessment report on a real application. Different types of applications were tracked, such as rural subdivision, residential subdivision, residential development, or a non-residential development. Three
practice examples are outlined below.

Example 1
Students assess the management of a planning project. Criteria include initiation, development, management, implementation and outcomes of a planning-based project. As part of the appraisal, the project must be contextualised within its socio-cultural, political and organisational context. Students must also demonstrate reflection about the ethical issues associated with the project e.g. professional conduct, accountability, and public good. Assessment is graded with 10 per cent project plan, with the whole project accounting for 85 per cent of the marks in the course.

Example 2
Students work in groups of three to prepare a development application for a predetermined site. They create a ‘council’ file which tracks the application through the statutory planning process. The aim of the task is to ensure that students understand the statutory processes and the implications for developers and the community members involved.

Example 3
Students write a ministerial briefing evaluating a major public works/planning development application and associated EIS. They make recommendations to the Minister about supporting with conditions, or rejecting it, according to their responsibilities under the Act. They also review the assessment process to determine if it needs to be changed e.g. to be transparent, independent.

How was assessment used in conjunction with tracking a development application?
Nine out of the ten courses that used track development assessment tasks favoured grading as the evaluation method. The other course used pass/fail. The most popular task type was assignment/essay/report, including individual and group reports, an in-class assignment, a development application report, a ministerial briefing, and a written assignment. One course coordinator noted the use of a reflective element within the group report.

Studio project-based
Overall statistics

- Used in 23 courses
- Undergraduate (11), undergraduate/postgraduate (5) and postgraduate (7)
- Assessed in 22 courses
- Evaluation methods: formative (1); graded (21)
- Assessment types: assignment; group or individual report; concept plan; scoping paper; reflection; oral presentation; project; portfolio

What types of studios were undertaken?
Use of a studio as an EL activity usually implies that the course involves addressing a brief for a specific site using design techniques that may or may not include liaison with a client/proponent and community. As Coiacetto (2008, p. 28) explains, in a planning studio ‘students, often in teams, work and apply their planning skills to a real problem, sometimes for a real client, working towards a solution under supervision and guidance of teaching staff’. As described by respondents, in some design studios, students responded to a development proposal or impact or sustainability assessment, implying the use of criteria and standards. Some respondents used the term to
describe strategic planning with variations related to sustainability, transport, climate change adaptation, or consultation. Others used it to refer to purposes such as a final year thesis or research project, which involved a design, strategic plan or data analysis for strategic planning. Examples of different understandings of studios are included below:

Studio projects are always real sites and real issues; client and community are not always involved although they may attend final student presentations and contribute to one or two studio sessions.

Planning and design students evaluate a site proposal submitted by students in another degree program at the university. The evaluation includes social, ecological and land use aspects. The students propose amendments based on a triple bottom line evaluation of the development proposal. Major assessment task 30–40 per cent of total grade. It requires submission of planning evaluation and report, suggested amendments and evaluation of strengths and weaknesses. This part is sent to the students who designed the initial submission. In addition, my students must write a reflective component in relation to the skills enhancement of the task.

and

Students developed a framework for a planning strategy for building community resilience in a bushfire prone peri-urban area. Criterion-based, graded assessment of the final strategy framework submitted.

How was assessment used in conjunction with studios?
Assessment was predominantly graded with only one course reporting a formative role of the studio towards an assessed project task. Popular assessment types used were assignments/essays/reports. Group work was also a focus with tasks such as a community analysis report, concept plan and the development of a scoping paper, data gathering, final group proposal and oral presentation. Although used less often than reports and group work, reflective tasks including a reflective diary or portfolio, were mentioned by several course coordinators.

Example 1
Guest speakers from government and private practice deliver perceptions and understandings on the course topic. Full-day field trip graded in form of a subsequent site interpretation and analysis report, design sessions (conceptual design) with final presentation to client who gives written and verbal feedback which is considered in the grading of assessment. Assessment tasks included graded group site analysis, graded individual concept design and client presentation. The outcomes of the projects are intended to inform the development, projects are selected which are in initial planning phases.

Example 2
Community and organisational representatives come to university to discuss and workshop issues in studio time. Work for a client to develop a community plan with a view to informing policy and actions. One-day field trip to establish relationships with key community stakeholders, studio work in groups reflecting a practice environment using diary which feeds into a reflective graded practice assessment at end of course.
Simulated development

Overall statistics

- Used in 43 courses
- Undergraduate (24), undergraduate/postgraduate (10) and postgraduate (9)
- Assessed in 43 courses
- Evaluation methods: formative (1); graded (37); pass/fail (5)
- Assessment types: assignment/essay/report; oral presentation; project; design concept; plan; site analysis; journal; online discussion posts

What types of simulated developments were undertaken?

This category of simulated development covers a diversity of EL activities that all relate to using materials drawn from or adapted from the ‘real’ world. Gaba (2004, p. 12) defines simulation as ‘a technique, not a technology, to replace or amplify real experiences with guided experience, often immersive in nature, that evoke or replicate substantial aspects of the real world in a fully interactive fashion. Simulation provides students with opportunity to practice skills within a controlled environment guided by the teachers and/or relevant planning practitioners. One respondent’s use of simulation can be very different from that of others. In the planning context, ‘simulated development of project at a real site’ is one example of using this technique that emphasises geographical location. Other respondents used simulation not in a spatial sense but in a contextual sense by focusing on particular documents, problems and issues. Quotations from survey participants below are categorised on the basis of the focus given to ‘place’, ‘document’ and ‘issue’ to demonstrate the diverse ways simulation is being used.

Place-foci

Partly yes, students are required to produce an Environmental Impact Assessment report of a real or hypothetical project proposed in a real geographic location in teams of 4-5. Students are to perform the assessment in accordance with relevant EIA regulation. Group project graded assignment 60 per cent.

Vegetation clearing site scenario-short local field visit to consider an application.

Assignment to design a twenty-hectare industrial precinct with full engineering infrastructure and costing.

Preparation of an environmental management plan for a real site that currently does not have one. Graded- completed as a group. Delivered to local government authority. Gives students experience in completing real-life management plan for real issue.

Students went to real site for supermarket development and completed the integrated transport assessment report. Graded assignment.
**Document-foci**

Project does not happen at site, but students required to assess a community development program with regard to: approach to program, level of community ownership/participation, who developed program and for whom; policy context; critique of program aims and objectives and proposed or actual activities, timelines, and allocated costs. Recommendations for project improvements. Graded.

Not at site but students required to critically review and compare three different impact assessments re: the legitimacy of the review... scope of the review; methods used in terms of validity and rigour; types of data used and ease of understanding; clarity and reliability of data interpretation; and usefulness for decision-making in planning. Graded.

**Issue-foci**

Response to a brief – students are required to imagine they work for a planning consultancy; they must identify a real-world transport problem in their area, and prepare a ‘response to a brief’ describing how their consultancy would investigate the problem.

Student groups are required to select an environmental planning issues which can be area- or species-based. Groups are required to produce both a site/species analysis and a structure/recovery/rehabilitation plan.

‘Conflict Analysis’ and ‘Design of Resolution/Management Process’ on a real environmental conflict. Two graded reports worth 60 per cent of grade.

Sort of – Students prepare research report based on current issue in environmental policy and planning using real data that is publicly available. Graded group assessment. Students learn to search for and use publicly available data to answer a question about environmental policy and/or planning.

**How was assessment used in association with simulation?**

The vast majority of simulation activities were project-based and assessed by grading, with a few using pass/fail. An assignment/essay/report format was dominant with a focus on group work, including group presentations and practical design exercises. One example used a group site analysis task in combination with an individual concept design and presentation. It is interesting to note that, in some of the responses, the assessment is strongly integrated into and reflects the pattern of linking to clearly distinguishable stages of the simulated activity, e.g. one example used assessment for each of the stages from a tender submission, a SWOT analysis, a stage one presentation, a design proposal, a feasibility report to a final presentation.

**Work on project for client**

**Overall statistics**

- Used in 20 courses
- Undergraduate (12), undergraduate/postgraduate (4) and postgraduate (4)
- Assessed in 20 courses
- Evaluation methods: formative (1); graded (17); pass/fail (1)
- Assessment types: assignment; group or individual report; concept plan; scoping paper; reflection; oral presentation; project; portfolio
**What types of work on project for a client were undertaken?**

This type of experiential learning activity was used in one-fifth of courses surveyed. Finding suitable projects can be on an ‘opportunistic basis’, as reported by one course coordinator. Others arranged for students to ‘work’ for a local council or state government department assisting in the development of plans and strategies. Another course provided consultation of a real project for a client and/or interest groups. There were often close links and overlap (what the project team refers to as ‘clustering’) between the EL activities of working on a project for a client, simulations and studios.

**How was assessment used with work for a client?**

Assessment tasks can be used to provide data for the clients – essays, poster competition, development of stakeholder analysis and consultation plan, group reports and presentations. Work for a client can also be assessed as part of other experiential learning activities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 1</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>In 2011, students completed the integrated transport assessment report for the Rugby World Cup.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Go to Indigenous and non-Indigenous community and interview range of government/industry people about their views on sustainable imperatives.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 3</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students prepare an economic development strategy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Yes, assignments 1 and 2 provide data to clients (Department of Transport and Places Victoria, respectively). Assignment 3 (there are only three assignments) is a poster competition sponsored by Department of Planning. Essay assignments 1 and 2 use the data collection to answer (1) how to improve walkability and comfort in public space; (2) how to improve equity and liveability in a community; (3) what good idea from elsewhere would make XXX a better city?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Example 5</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Environmental management plan delivered to local government authority</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Role play**

**Overall statistics**

- Used in 23 courses
- Undergraduate (10), undergraduate/postgraduate (8) and postgraduate (5)
- Assessed in 18 courses
- Evaluation methods: graded (17); pass/fail (1)
- Assessment types: oral presentation; assignment/essay/report; reflection

**How were role plays used in these courses?**

Types of role plays included moot courts, mock hearing re a planning appeal, tribunal case, mock EPA meeting on current issues, e.g. climate change. They also included acting as a
local council DA planner responding to a development application; a planning commission scenario to assess an eco-tourist development proposal, strategic planning process (e.g. sustainability plan for the university); dealing with various aspects of a management issue; negotiation and conflict resolution role playing activities; managing customer services with a development proponent; and finally, four role plays within one course that simulate planning conflicts and ask for imaginative responses. Responses included student presentations to a mock panel with staff playing other roles such as chair, committee member or discipline expert, as well as presenting in front of local government planners.

Students take on roles such as:

- community activist
- developer
- environmental consultant
- lawyer and expert witness
- local council DA planner
- local government planner
- marginalised/silenced stakeholder
- mediator
- professional consultant planner
- state government officer.

**How was assessment used with role play?**

Most role plays were graded with only one course using this activity formatively. Whilst oral presentation is the most important assessment element in role plays, some courses also included essay tasks with the presentation. Other variations included the use of small-scale assessments based on role plays in tutorials while another involved peer assessment. Further, another course included participation and a reflective element in the written task which was graded as 30 per cent of total marks.

**Work experience**

**Overall statistics**

- Used in 12 courses
- Undergraduate (9), undergraduate/postgraduate (1) and postgraduate (2)
- Assessed in 12 courses
- Evaluation methods: graded (8); pass/fail (3); n/a (1)
- Assessment types: oral presentation; work journal; assignment/essay/report; reflection; supervisor assessment; exam; portfolio; poster

**How was work experience structured?**

The length of time spent by students in formal work experience (also known as a practicum) varied between one and 60 days across different courses (see Figure 4.). Measurements of these practica varied from hours, days and weeks across responses. For purposes of reporting the results, these measurements were converted to days based on eight hours work/day in a five-day working week. All work experience courses were assessed.
Practica allow students to explore contemporary planning issues such as planning ethics, professionalism and the theory-practice relationship as well as the boundaries, scope and role of the profession from within a planning workplace. Students can also contribute their ideas to the profession and the workplace.

Students usually find their own placement but, in some courses, coordinators provide guidance about searching for placements or references to recommend students for scholarships and cadetships. One course reported using professional contacts to find placements. One has a negotiated contract between student, university and employer. Another has a two-day orientation workshop prior to the practicum and a post-practicum debrief session where students discuss and compare their experiences. Generally the practica are coordinated by university staff and students are supervised by both placement and university staff. One course coordinator reported providing online support. The project team identified three basic types of work experience based on length of time, and examples of these are provided below.
Example 1 – Short-term work experience

Two courses use the approach of students spending one day in local council planning department. Both use a reflective piece of assessment. In one course, the students keep a reflective journal and make a presentation to staff, colleagues and invited guests. This activity comprises 40 per cent of total mark for course. Similarly, this activity is a mandatory requirement for an assessment task. Another course has a compulsory six-day work experience for students with a negotiated contract between the student, the university and the employer, which is assessed through a journal and reflective piece.

Example 2 – Medium-term work experience

Several other universities have longer work experience opportunities for students. For example, one university has a 160-hr practicum for fourth year students in which students are mentored by a planning practitioner whilst on placement in a planning office. The practicum begins with a two-day workshop and ends with a popular post-practicum session where students discuss and compare their experiences. Students complete a diary/report reflecting on the experience. The course coordinator also collects comments from the practitioner who supervised the student – some comments may guide potential changes to the program.

Example 3 – Long-term work experience

Other universities have up to 60-day practicums in government or private sector planning departments or organisations. One course coordinator commented that this experience has a very high impact on the growth of practical skills for students especially in development assessments. In this course, assessment includes student presentations and graded journals as well as a non-graded work supervisor’s report.

How was assessment used in association with work experience?

Eight courses graded their assessment of work experience, three used pass/fail and one course did not provide a response. Commonly used assessment tasks included oral presentations, a work journal, assignment/essay/report and a reflective journal/report on the experience. The work supervisor’s assessment was also considered in some work placements, either as a formative and/or summative part. One survey respondent shared that:

Assessment is non-graded for performance in workplace; graded for student seminar on experience of placement and graded for reflective journal on experience.

Courses have different combinations of assessment processes as seen in the following examples:

One course is a hurdle task where students complete a diary/report reflecting on the experiences using criteria developed in a first assignment.

Another course uses five assessment items: presentation and poster 25 per cent; journal article on planning issue 25 per cent; supervisor assessment 10 per cent; professionalism and participation 20 per cent; and exam 20 per cent.

Another course grades the student presentation and reflective journals but the employer submits a non-graded assessment for performance in workplace.
Another course grades assessment tasks but also requires a pass/fail from placement host.

and

A further example used ungraded but formative informal seminars with the academic coordinator and fellow students to share and convey the range of planning work and intern experiences. Other assessment contributes to a graded mark: report by workplace supervisor 20 per cent; reflective journal/diary 30 per cent; and review paper reflecting on the experience 50 per cent.

**Other EL activities**

**Overall statistics**

- Used in 16 courses
- Undergraduate (5), undergraduate/postgraduate (9) and postgraduate (2)
- Assessed in 15 courses
- Evaluation methods: graded (13); pass/fail (2)
- Assessment types: case study; assignment/essay/report; oral presentation

**What other EL activities were used?**

The main emphasis in the other EL activities reported was the use of ‘case studies’ (perhaps reflecting the close links between planning education and the discipline of geography, where the use of case studies is prevalent). The purpose varied depending on the course content but included case studies for learning about other cultures, ‘real life’ planning exercises, and conflict negotiation and resolution about a planning or environmental issue. Other courses involved data collection including interviews and secondary data analysis or feasibility assessments and audits. One course used problem-based learning with ‘real-world’ problem to investigate and provide responses. Other activities included computer simulation and scrapbooking of readings and activities.

An extensive list of examples is included below to demonstrate the diversity of other experiential learning activities nominated by survey respondents.

- Marae visit/hui. Every year students go to the marae for a day or overnight, each student will go twice during their course.
- Conflict analysis of a real case study
- Assessment for the masters students is to provide them with a [case study of a] real life planning exercise
- Students have to conduct interviews with professionals about their experiences in community consultation
- Gathering of secondary data, and associated quantitative analysis, to support the viability of a proposed small business
Alternative assignment to undertake a feasibility analysis of a small factory block involving project scheduling, sensitivity analysis and risk management, all computer-based.

Students are provided with data sets (SPSS and Excel files) from actual planning studies (surveys). Students assume role of planning consultant and analyse data and prepare professional report for planning client.

Assessment of own neighbourhood using 12 principles of planning for health developed by Barton and Tsouros (2000) for WHO Healthy Cities project.

Workshop examples are all related to planning and methods planners can use to research a topic. Research proposal is developed.

As the flipside/extension of the 'response to a brief', described above, students are required to identify a real-world transport problem in their local area and proceed to investigate the problem, including data collection, recommendations etc.

Computer simulation in class. Not sure how this fits into your classification, but for the in the planning history part of Planning Theory students worked in groups to produce SimCity versions of one of Howard’s Garden City, Le Corbusier’s Radiant City, Soria y Mata’s Linear City or Wright’s Broadacre City.

Students required to track an environmental issue for at least three weeks, collect the material and provide a critical review.

How was assessment used in relation to other EL activities?

Case studies were used as the basis of assessment tasks in some courses. Assessment types ranged from essays and other written assignments to case study reports, development of a research proposal, team work and group oral presentations, to weekly tutorial projects and assessment of online discussion board posts.

4.3: Summary and discussion

This section briefly discusses the limitations and key findings that emerged from the results of the baseline survey.

Survey limitations

As noted earlier in this chapter, there was substantial variation in the raw data upon which findings from the survey are based. The level of detail provided in survey forms differed markedly, with a minority of respondents writing comprehensive descriptions of learning activities and related assessment tasks. The vast majority of survey respondents used the survey instrument to provide a brief outline of their use of EL. Less than 10 per cent of respondents provided information – such as email commentary or course guides – additional to the completed survey forms. Survey respondents also differed in their understanding of how to complete the survey form, especially in terms of how to report the use of EL under the categories provided. Additionally, two respondents reported on whole programs rather than individual courses. These differences in the amount, type and nature
of the information provided mean that the results of the survey should be understood as indicative of broad trends of the state of EL in Australian and New Zealand planning programs rather than a comprehensive representative picture.

**Key survey findings**

A number of findings about the use of EL within Australian and New Zealand planning programs emerged from the baseline survey.

- A very high number of course coordinator respondents (50 out of 52) reported using some form of EL in their teaching. Ninety-seven of 100 courses reported on contained at least one EL activity.
- At approximately 20 per cent of universities EL was used in ten or more planning courses, while at approximately 80 per cent of universities EL was used in six or fewer planning courses. This provides some evidence that the overall use of EL across planning programs varies significantly, suggesting an inconsistent and *ad hoc* approach.
- Variations in the way that survey respondents filled out the survey form are likely to reflect diversity in the way that EL activities are understood and used. Certainly, the same EL activity category can mean very different things for different respondents. Equally, there was significant diversity in how course coordinators and lecturers were using activity types. One person’s ‘simulation’ is very different from another’s – some may be fully immersive. Activity types can be interpreted differently by individual educators.
- The average number of EL activities per course was only slightly higher at postgraduate level (3.0 EL activities per course) than undergraduate level (2.8 EL activities per course).
- Guest presentations are the most popular EL activity. This provides some evidence that many survey respondents do understand guest speakers as a form of EL.
- Simulated development activities and field trips were also popular EL activity types.
- In every EL activity category written assessment methods, such as assignments, essays and reports, were dominant; however the use of examinations was minimal. Survey respondents noted that oral presentations were also used frequently while the use of reflection was less extensive but evident within studios, role play, work-on-a-project for a client and work experience activities.
- The link between an EL activity and assessment was weakest in the guest presentation category with only 40 per cent using some form of assessment. Further, respondents reported that only 68 per cent of field trips were linked to assessment. Links between EL activities and assessment were strong in all other categories.
- While many of the EL activities, such as studio, simulation and work practicum are focused, it is possible that other activities such as regional / international field studies and local field trips have a wider appeal for different types of courses and purposes.
- Survey responses suggest that some activity types were used in combination. Sometimes these combinations – role plays, simulations at a real site and work-for-a-client, for example – were used within a larger experiential learning activity such as a studio course.
• In addition, the results of the survey suggest that individual experiential activity types are not necessarily discrete and clearly distinguishable from each other. In other words, activity types may overlap.

Based on the results of the survey and after discussion with partners at the workshops, it was decided to adjust the original order of the EL activities to be used in this report to the following:

1. guest speakers
2. field trips
3. studios
4. simulated development
5. work-for-a-client
6. role play
7. work placement/practicum
8. other.
Chapter 5: Lessons from the case studies

This chapter reports on the outcomes of Phases Two and Three of the project. In Phase Two the project team refined courses using the principles as a guide and administered student surveys to gain feedback on the effectiveness of experiential learning activities undertaken in each case study. Each course trial is written up as a case study (Phase Three), which reports on how the principles were implemented in the course and provides excerpts of student feedback. All case studies are detailed in Appendix F, including the student evaluations, and feature in the online toolkit. Lessons learnt from the case studies are explored across four sections:

1. Overview of the case studies
2. The effectiveness of the EL principles and their use in redesigning courses
3. Improvements in assessment as a result of the case studies
4. Benefits and challenges of experiential learning as revealed through the case studies.

5.1: Overview of the case studies

The case studies illustrate how project partners improved their experiential learning practice and student learning outcomes through this project by documenting the application of the EL principles to courses; reviewing assessment methods; and using feedback from student surveys to suggest possible changes to future offerings of the course. The case studies are components of the online toolkit of resources, which includes links explaining how to improve application of experiential learning approaches. The Toolkit is online at <www.experientiallearninginplanning.com.au>.

The online toolkit outlines 17 case studies across the revised set of categories listed at the end of Chapter 4 and includes suggestions for improving or developing experiential learning activities. Table 5.1 below summarises the 17 case studies, and is followed by an overview of the case studies under these categories.
Table 5.1: Summary of experiential learning case studies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Activity</th>
<th>Case study details</th>
<th>Location in program</th>
<th>No.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guest Speakers</td>
<td>Advanced Planning Practice (USC)</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Sustainable Environmental Management (UTAS)</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field Trips</td>
<td>Introduction to Planning (ECU)</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>International Study Tour (La Trobe)</td>
<td>Middle and Final</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Environmental Planning/Urban Planning for Health (ECU)</td>
<td>Final and Postgraduate</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Change in Urban and Rural Australia (La Trobe)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio</td>
<td>Development Processes Studio (GU)</td>
<td>Middle and Postgraduate</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Children in their Environments (La Trobe)</td>
<td>Final and Postgraduate</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulated Development</td>
<td>Introduction to Planning and Design (La Trobe)</td>
<td>Early</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning &amp; Environmental Law (USC)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work-for-a-Client</td>
<td>Planning Theory, Process and Applications (UTAS)</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
<td>11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Public Participation (USC)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Play</td>
<td>Conflict Resolution in Planning (USC)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Urban Governance and Planning Law (La Trobe)</td>
<td>Final and Postgraduate</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Work Placement/Practicum</td>
<td>The Practice of Planning (ECU)</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Planning Practicum (USC)</td>
<td>Final</td>
<td>16</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>EL Activities in Classroom with Diverse Student Cohort (USC)</td>
<td>Middle</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Where case studies are located in the program indicates the complexity of the EL activity and the amount of prerequisite knowledge that is needed before students can successfully complete the course. Case Study 17 is interesting as it provides insights into planning for more than one EL activity in a single course.

1. Guest Speakers

*Description*
Inviting planning practitioners from government, private practice or NGOs to talk to students is a popular experiential learning activity. Guest presenters (often referred to as ‘guest lecturers’) can introduce students to a wide range of planning roles and opportunities for employment, inject real world experience into the classroom, and give students the benefit of years of accumulated ‘tacit’ knowledge (Polanyi, 1958, p. 1966) complementing the academic and theoretical knowledge offered by faculty. The added applied dimension can simultaneously provide inspiration for career choice (Albrecht, 2012).

Evidence from the Case Studies 1 and 2 highlights that invited practitioners can:

- inspire and motivate students
- offer insight from a practitioner’s perspective
- increase the effectiveness of faculty lectures by expanding on aspects such as the latest changes in the planning system, or the challenges of applying planning theory, law, and ethics
- provide students with political savvy and insider wisdom about planning processes
- reflect on the practical use of design techniques, methods of data collection and analysis
- communicate skills that are valued and needed in the workforce.

Furthermore, guest speakers can reinforce the need for generic attributes, such as the ability to work in multi-disciplinary teams, effective communication, understanding social, cultural and ethical responsibilities of a professional planner, and demonstrating lifelong learning and the need to be adaptable and pragmatic as a planner. The extensive use of guest speakers points towards an intuition by educators that these speakers can be very effective as an experiential learning activity as they speak with an authentic voice.

Feedback from students obtained in case studies reinforces the need to clearly differentiate guest presentations from the traditional format of faculty lectures. For example, one student noted that ‘guest lectures were not really “experiential” with regard to student experiences; the guests related their professional experience, which was relevant, but they were simply extensions of the lecturer’. Ensuring guest speakers fulfil identified learning outcomes requires close collaboration between the guest and the course coordinator. On the practitioner’s part, they need to be well-organised, able to clearly explain what will be covered and why, and use case studies or examples based on experience. This is discussed in greater detail in Section 5.4.
Case studies

Case Study 1 - Practitioner talks in final year Advanced Planning Practice course (USC)
In a final year course in Advanced Planning Practice, practitioners complement lectures on the application of theory and methods by contributing to discussions about specific complex planning issues. Practitioners provide examples and case studies based on their experience. They were also asked to reflect on their professional careers, where they started and the route they took to get to their current position.

For example, a local government practitioner described planning policies that informed the development of a planning scheme – enabling students to understand the issues faced in an assessment task. After one of the practitioner presentations, students were asked to write a 2-minute essay on what they learned from the guest, their papers were handed in, and then read back to students during the final course review session. This course precedes the student work placement and is intended to prepare students for challenges they might face in the workplace. (See Case Study 1 in Appendix F.)

Case Study 2: Guest speakers in core Environmental Management/Planning postgraduate course (UTAS)
Hour-long presentations by guest speakers are used in 8 of 13 weeks of teaching. Guest presentations are delivered in the last hour of a 4-hour class. Pedagogically, this means that the course coordinator initially provides postgraduate students with content and theory on a particular workshop theme, and then guest speakers provide students with practical exemplification of key concepts and principles related to that theme. Placement in the last hour of a four-hour teaching session also serves the practical purpose of breaking up the time via a different learning activity delivered by a different person each session.

In this case, guest speakers are selected on the basis that their individual content fits with the central messages of the course, and that their presentations are engaging and interactive. Opportunities for discussion and Q&A sessions are encouraged. The educator uses discussion periods to explicitly link guest presentations to previous theoretical content and the overall course outcomes. Effort is made to source guest speakers from a variety of occupations and organisations so as to increase the diversity and range of professional perspectives and experiences. (See Case Study 2 in Appendix F.)

Considerations when using guest lecturers

• The course coordinator needs to be quite clear about the purpose of the guest lecturer contribution.
• Brief the guest presenter well on what the students have been taught about the topic, how practitioner input could enhance their learning, and how their experience might provide examples to use in their lecture.
• Provide tips about appropriate use of teaching strategies and classroom technology e.g. PowerPoint presentations if the practitioner is inexperienced with teaching/presenting, and how questions may be used to engage students and to facilitate student reflection.
• Ensure that students understand the relevance of the guest lecturer’s talk ahead of
time and prepare them to ask questions or participate in a discussion.

- Make time after the lecture to draw out from the students what they learned and how it relates to their coursework material.

2. Field Trips

Description

Field trips provide students with the opportunity for first-hand observation and experience directly relating to their studies, and may include local, interstate and international inspections, projects, trips and tours. In some cases, lecturers use field trips within courses to carry out analysis in the field. Fieldwork is completed in an environment, normally outside the university, sometimes with the assistance of another organisation. The focus is on linking what is learnt in class with what is seen, collected and tested in the field. The specific aims of fieldwork may vary including: observing in the field principles learnt in class; applying classroom knowledge to real situations; and collecting information through surveys and observations.

Case Studies

Case Study 3: Local field trip (ECU)
Introduction to Planning is a first year core unit for planning students enrolled in the Bachelor of Planning. The unit aims to provide a broad introduction to planning practice in Western Australia. Field trips are used to allow students to develop planning knowledge and group skills via three of the four assessments. Students are required to develop a site analysis and structure plan for an Activity Centre identified by local government planners as needing major redevelopment.

Case Study 4: International field trip (La Trobe)
Based in an elective course, this three-week study tour of the west coast of Canada and the USA involved people living in remote communities; Vancouver downtown neighbourhoods; a design charrette; and a U.S. university program on transport, urban regeneration, agriculture and food.

Case Study 5: Environmental Planning /Urban Planning for Health (ECU)
A combined field trip for Environmental Planning and Urban Planning for Health students to new suburbs in north Perth earmarked as a major growth corridor reveals major planning, environmental and transport issues and ways of incorporating built environmental forms that are beneficial to public health.

Case Study 6: Change in Urban and Rural Australia (La Trobe)
This case study relates to a field-based program exploring processes of socio-economic and environmental change in urban and rural Australia. The subject is based around two fieldtrips (Melbourne and Swan Hill region) and is intended to provide students with an intensive program of comparative examples of policy, social change and physical transformations in urban and rural settings. The experience involves meeting interlocutors on-site, being ‘in-place’ in often unfamiliar settings and engagement between students from
a metropolitan and a regional campus of the university. Students are expected to listen deeply to environments and non-experts in the community to engage with ideas that, at least on the surface, appear uncontroversial yet reveal rich examples relevant to the project.

**Considerations when using field trips**

- Students appreciate the ability to develop a site identified as requiring major development.
- Students value linking field trips to assessments and using this learning activity to develop planning knowledge and develop generic skills.
- Students prefer a structured, content-rich field trip experience with guidance on statutory and strategic planning.
- It is necessary to provide detailed guidance and advice to students to ensure appropriate behaviour in public and when working with planning professionals.
- It is necessary to liaise with a range of professionals.
- Resourcing field trips is currently a minor issue but could be problematic in the future.

### 3. Studio and project-based activities

**Description**

In a studio session, students spend time in a workshop-type learning environment, with sufficient space for the hands on development of creative products, drawing on diverse resource materials and often working in groups. Sessions are usually practical and facilitated by one or more instructors who can provide formative feedback each week about progress in the project. Students are offered opportunities to learn collaboratively, practise particular skills and engage in individual and group activities.

**Case studies**

**Case Study 7: Studio (Griffith)**

This 13-week studio project is taught one full day per week to 45–70 students. It is a guided experiential learning activity to create a product – a land development feasibility study – in four progressive and assessable steps. Student feedback indicates that students believe this is a challenging project, but feedback is positive. In graduate surveys, students regularly report that studios are the best aspect of their study program at Griffith University. On rare occasions, students complain that they have difficulty taking responsibility for their learning, commenting, for example, that ‘I had to do the learning myself’.

Expanding on the experiential nature of the studio, Yammer (akin to Facebook) was trialled in 2012, as an online tool to:

1. facilitate communication and sharing of information, resources, documents and ideas between all students
2. reflect on and capture the inductive learning and change of thinking that happens as students work through the project. Students were invited to reflect on questions (elaborated Coiacetto 2012 pp. 28-31).

Student feedback showed that they understood the purpose of Yammer. For example: ‘to answer questions from the educator and share in conversations with other students’, ‘to show what we learnt, express ideas, make friends with other class mates, share ideas’, and ‘to write down and record all your thoughts and experiences throughout the course and to see what other people have learnt’. However, only 12 per cent of students used Yammer to communicate and to share files. No students responded to the questions posed by the educator on Yammer despite repeated reminders. Various reasons were given for not using Yammer: lack of time; unwillingness to try new software; software user-unfriendly; preference for in-person communication; preference for alternative software such as Facebook, Google Documents, email and Dropbox to facilitate group interaction; timidity about sharing thoughts in a collective forum.

Case Study 8: Children in their environments
This case study showcases a unique subject that was developed so students had a deeper understanding about children’s and young people’s needs, views, use and aspirations in relation to their environments. The majority of students had some knowledge of engagement processes. However, ways of communicating with children and young people are different from those when working with adults. There is also a need to meet secondary curriculum requirements and allocated class times. The main objective for this subject was to train students to conduct child- and youth-centred participatory planning and design activities. All students were required to obtain a ‘Working with Children’ check to participate in the subject.

Students were required to identify the Articles from the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child that were relevant to planning, and then select one article to detail its relevance to a specific planning theory and practice issue. Students were also required to conduct a content analysis of a local government planning scheme to identify the position of children and young people within spatial policy, and to comment on their findings.

The site visits, master plan, site design, grant application and presentation with critique provided opportunity to make a valuable contribution to schools for future planning, and to receive significant feedback about their ideas, presentation style and professionalism. For example, students were required to tender for Council’s contract to plan and conduct community consultation with children and young people in an outer suburban area of Melbourne. As part of the process, a landscape architect specialising in play space design conducted a one-day seminar, and returned with a colleague to evaluate the students’ work.

Considerations for a studio course

- Provide an opportunity in an introductory course, part way through the semester for students to submit an interim report (graded or ungraded) to ensure that they are on track and understand university requirements.
• Offer guidelines about the form of the presentation required rather than relying on the natural competitiveness of students and groups to produce high quality presentations.
• Provide ‘best practice’ examples of other similar designs (i.e. bicycle path construction) and costing information early in the process if the studio is in the first year of the program.
• Studios may also apply a composite of EL activities, such as those carried out in Case Study 8. They also provide opportunities for students to experiment in the ‘real world’ with processes that are not usually carried out by planners (e.g. applying for a grant).

5. Simulated development projects

Description

It is often difficult to separate this type of project from those carried out as part of an entire studio course. However, in this context the aim is to identify individual assessment tasks within individual courses for which the use of a simulated development project offers the student insights into a specific issue or process. Most simulations are based on the ‘problem-based’ learning model and are commonly used in professional programs to ensure students have functional knowledge – knowledge about how the practice of planning is carried out in a particular planning system. In this type of process, students are presented with a problem, issue or query and information about the parameters which guide students in working through theoretical knowledge, legislative frameworks and other influences. The outcome is to develop a solution and demonstrate what they have learned through feedback of various kinds.

Case Study 9: Introduction to Planning and Design (La Trobe)

This case study is an assessed project undertaken as group work by all first year students. Much of the subject is still delivered in a traditional lecture/tutorial/studio/workshop format. Changes to subject content, presentation and assessment were made to provide students with a planning, design and presentation component. Groups consisting of 5–6 students undertook a semester-long project to research, plan, locate, design, cost and present a selected bicycle path route from the main university campus to the Bendigo Hospital where La Trobe also has a campus. Groups were given different cost scenarios to encourage them to explore low-cost solutions. Each group was required to prepare a report and make a presentation justifying their selected route and design. The experiential activities consisted of a class site inspection followed by individuals or group inspections augmenting the initial information with extra detailed observations needed in relation to a particular scenario.

Student feedback indicates that there is a difficulty in the first year to strike a balance between the amount of information provided to students and the amount they need to source for themselves. Even at the first year level, students were able to debate benefits and costs of various options in terms of safety and inconvenience, but they had difficulty balancing detailed design considerations with ‘big picture’ strategy issues. Group work also presented problems in ensuring consistent engagement and performance of all students.
Case Study 10: Planning and Environmental Law (USC)

This case study focuses on one assessment task (35 per cent), in a multi program course in which students worked in groups (4–5 members) to prepare a file in which they formulate a development application for development on a prescribed site. This continued with the preparation of an assessment to show how the development complies with the planning scheme provisions, carrying out the public notification of the development and preparing a submission to council. In the final phase of the ‘file’, students act as Council members and prepare a decision notice, which also includes advice about the applicant’s and submitter’s rights of appeal.

Templates to illustrate best practice were provided on the course website – these were noted on the Group Assessment Sheet/Checklist. Individual students also kept a diary to reflect on their performance in the group project – for which an assessment sheet was also provided.

Students commented positively on the realism of processing a proper development application. Some also realised how useful it was to get to know the Council and State Government databases used in the Queensland Integrated Development Assessment System. However, student feedback also demonstrates that, while students ultimately recognised what they had learnt, they resented working on a multi-disciplinary group project over five weeks of the semester due to time pressures and the different priorities of team members.

Considerations for developing simulated development projects within a course

- Ensure that the scale of the project is appropriate to the time and resources available to students in an individual course.
- Be careful in designing problem-based learning opportunities in a course which is a compulsory course over a number of programs. The potential for timetable difficulties may affect the quality of the student output. Also, not all students share the same motivation for learning in this area – differences in the functional knowledge required in each discipline represented in the course are evident.
- Place an emphasis on the importance of the reflective report/diary.
- Students are sometimes intimidated by the scale and the ‘realism’ of a project, and may only become aware of what they have achieved after the project is completed.
- Ensure that students begin complex projects early; however, not all students respond to a need for regular feedback.
- Introduce some formative peer review into the project which reduces the pressure of formal assessment required at the end of the project.
6. Work-for-a-client

Description

Students act as a consulting team responding to a client brief to investigate options for future development. These roles will vary from project to project depending on client needs and the course outcomes.

Case Study 11: Planning Theory Process and Applications (UTAS)

This case study examines the introduction of a discrete 6-week ‘work for a client’/‘mini-studio’ exercise as an addition to the traditional lecture and workshop program format. The learning activity was designed to give on-campus students practical experience in planning processes and opportunities to apply theoretical learning to real world problems.

Information about the learning activity was obtained using student reflective writings about the nature of open space and client expectations; student questionnaires about the need for open space and its different characteristics; and, finally, a face-to-face interview with the client.

Students went into the field, applied GIS in analysing open space gaps and presented their findings to the client. Feedback shows that students gained insight into the complexity of planning processes and that they addressed a real world problem.

Case Study 12: Public Participation (USC)

This course provides a theoretical basis and practical skills in participatory decision-making and conflict resolution. Experiential activities included the development of communication, active listening and facilitation skills through tutorial worksheets and group role plays. The course uses three small group assessment tasks: developing a stakeholder analysis and consultation plan; undertaking this consultation with a community including data analysis and the preparation of a report; and finally a class presentation of the outcomes.

Students valued the taster of being a professional and addressing a ‘real world’ issue and better understood the skills needed by a planner doing consultation. Feedback from the client was that ‘it is reassuring to know that planning students are being taught how to engage a range of people’.

Considerations for developing work-for-a-client activities

- Allow sufficient time to refine the brief with the client in keeping with the intended learning outcomes for students as well as giving value to the client.
- Address the need to purposefully link theory to practice through a variety of EL activities such as case studies and guest lectures.
- This activity is an opportunity for students to gain insights into the complexity of planning processes.
- Students are involved in problem-solving and apply skills by stepping into the professional role and then reflecting on the process and outcomes. Students appreciate that they addressing a ‘real world’ problem.
Students need guidance in how to accomplish tasks involved in group work, i.e. group roles, responsibilities and dynamics.

These projects can be mutually beneficial for the client and the students.

Allow sufficient time for student and client reflection on the learning activity.

7. Role play

Description

Role plays simulate a real world experience by engaging students to take on roles, face problems, formulate strategies, make decisions, and receive feedback on the consequences (Davidson et al. 2009). The participant can play a role they are comfortable with, or take on the role of someone outside their 'comfort zone'. Role plays can vary from simple and unstructured to rules-based games. Role plays seem to be most commonly used in planning education in a negotiation, community engagement, conflict resolution, and the presentation of a case to a mock tribunal.

Playing a role allows the student to 'stand in the person's shoes' and understand issues from multiple perspectives, develop understanding of how individuals experience their world and why, and confront stereotypes. Students learn planning content, but also learn communication skills by playing the role; they learn to construct strong arguments and evaluate strengths and weakness of opposing claims. Role plays develop generic skills in communication, public speaking, thinking on one's feet, problem-solving and critical thinking. Depending on the role play, the student learns cooperation, consensus-making or negotiation skills. Role plays allow testing of scenarios and strategies in a non-threatening way that working in a real situation may not offer.

Case studies

Case Study 13: Conflict resolution in Planning (USC)

Students worked in groups of six with each person having a specific role in resolving an urban development conflict: proponent, Council planner, planning consultant, appellants, and a facilitator/mediator. As this was based on a real development that had been to court several years before, students were given considerable information on the project and the conflict and each had different instructions on how to play their parts.

From this role play activity students discover there is a need to develop a range of conflict resolution skills for planning practice in order to address different types or levels of conflict. The process of acting out the roles was confronting to some students but, on the whole, students enjoyed the experience and were able to reflect positively on the experience, learning valuable lessons for future practice.

Case Study 14: Urban governance and Planning Law (La Trobe)

A case study town was used to illustrate various issues associated with statutory and strategic planning. A community group organised a series of briefings and discussion groups with students, conducted a walking tour with students recording information and the La Trobe University marketing department videoing the event.
Later, a mock tribunal hearing was convened; a highly experienced planner with tribunal experience was appointed as Chair. Three cases were developed based on issues that the community and students had identified as contentious and realistic based on the fieldwork. Students operated in small groups taking the role of proponents, objectors and Council; material from each group was circulated under strict timelines in a sequence replicating planning permit application processes. The tribunal hearing audience included five representatives of the town who chose to sit through the cases to gain a better understanding of planning and how these issues were dealt with in a planning process.

Students also worked in groups of 6–7 to produce a 4-minute video with the objectives being: to explain ‘What is planning’; and to provide an introduction to the statutory planning process. As part of the whole process of liaising with the town’s community, a community information evening on planning was held. Students in the Bachelor of Strategic Communications program were assigned to work with planning students to assist with their script.

Finally individual students were required: to produce a report explaining what they had done personally in each group assessment; and to write a reflective piece on the value or otherwise of the community presentation, the mock tribunal hearing and the video.

**Considerations for developing a role play**

- To undertake role plays, adequate space is necessary to allow groups to work independently, and with adequate time; a 50–60 minute time slot is usually not enough.

- The instructor needs to have facilitation skills and act as a guide or coach. The briefing and context material need to be sufficiently realistic to be taken seriously by the students. The instructor needs to monitor conflict and to watch for team conflict, confusion about the purpose, and the withdrawal or lack of participation of any individual.

- To support students in gaining confidence, preparation might include preliminary short exercises to practise segments of the role play.

- Allowing play to continue in 20–30 minute time slots enables the instructor to coach students at various stages.

- Debriefing at stages during the role play, or at the end of the role play is critical to allow reflection on process, the roles, and opportunities for improvement. It is also an opportunity for participants to discuss the emotional pressures experienced during the role play, with the assistance of a coach.
8. The Practicum/workplace experience

Description

Practicum, work-based learning and work-integrated learning are terms usually attributed to an experience in which students learn and develop knowledge and skills through a wide range of interactions with people in the workplace, and through the completion of tasks, which may or may not be prescribed by academic supervisors. These workplace experiences may consist of sandwich courses, work placements, independent studies and negotiated learning, accreditation of prior learning and generic competencies generally required by employers. In the Planning discipline, work-based learning has been discussed by several authors (Freestone et al., 2006; Guile & Griffith, 2001; Manns, 2003). Freestone et al. (2006) summarise the various models of work-based learning. The appropriate duration for the experience is debated. The University of NSW model requires students to work for a full ‘sandwich’ year (Freestone et al., 2006), while other time frames include six months, 60 days or one month to one to three days in the office. Ideally, the industry mentor understands experiential learning principles and has a shared understanding with the university course coordinator about desired learning outcomes for students, given that learning outcomes will vary between individual students for a number of reasons – planning mentor experience and interest, variety of work in the office, collegial contacts and client/applicant contact.

Student experiences in non-governmental organisations may also be quite different in terms of the nature of student learning outcomes.

In an experiential learning approach to developing work-based learning, some emphasis is placed on Kolb’s process of learning (Chapter 2), with the student reflecting on what is observed and testing concepts in new situations. As a result, professional problem-solving and dealing with unexpected and uncertain situations requires that reflection is a central part of the assessment process. Guile and Griffith (2001) and Manns (2003) regard work experience as useful because of the ability to focus on the student’s interpersonal and social development in the profession, and to establish a passion for lifelong learning. Ideally, a student’s development should lead to greater dialogue and long-term cooperation between the workplace and education; student debriefing of the experience is part of that process (Guile & Griffith, 2001).

At both USC and ECU, the practicum is the culmination of a scaffolded approach to studio projects and work integrated learning (see Chapter 2). Two models are explored here, the ‘Day in the life of a Planner’ model from ECU and the longer unpaid 160-hour ‘practicum’ at USC.

Case Study 15: ‘Day in the life of a Planner’ (ECU)

Students are required to develop a set of employment-related resources including CVs, Letter of Introduction etc. in order to gain a placement in a private, public or not-for-profit planning organisation for a minimum of one day. Students then ‘shadow’ the planning professional throughout their working day and are included in a variety of activities including office meetings, plan production, development applications, meetings with stakeholders etc. Students may be highly involved in the planning activities undertaken, such as strategic plan production, assessing development applications, or may be more
‘hands off’, watching the process involved. Whilst the minimum requirement is a one-day placement, most students have forged a successful working relationship and continued in the workplace throughout semester.

Each student is required to give a 10-minute presentation highlighting the activities undertaken during their placement and reflecting on the experiences involved. The presentation also involves the production of a poster and/or a video. Planning professionals and ECU faculty academics are invited to the presentations and, where relevant, asked for confidential feedback about their student and their own experiences of hosting the students. Students produce a reflective journal focusing on their experiences in the workplace and showing how theory gained in class has been applied in the workplace.

**Case Study 16: ‘160 hour Practicum’ (USC)**

In the USC model, students complete a fourth and final year course through which they are placed in planning organisations with staff committing to a mentoring program, supporting the students while they work for a period of four weeks (160 hours). Mentors receive guidance about their roles. Before the placement, students complete a 2-day block course and consider what issues they need to think about (e.g. links between theory and practice) while on placement.

The course is delivered in three major sections:

**Pre-Placement Workshop** – Students:

  a. receive lectures from three guest practitioners (strategic planning, development assessment and a consultant) about the nature of planning offices, and ethical practice
  b. review and critique learning journals from previous students – development of reflective criteria and writing up day-to-day reflections
  c. work in groups to develop and test reflective criteria contributing to the development of an individual set of reflective criteria – the lens through which individual students reflect on their experience.

**The Practicum (4 weeks)** – during which students maintain an individual reflective journal reflecting on their experience.

**Post-Practicum workshop (debriefing)** – during which students present highlights of their individual experience and compare experiences. Students also complete a survey to provide feedback about their experience and make suggestions for improving the course. Planning mentors are interviewed to assess student performance and fit into the office, ability to perform tasks allocated and whether there are areas in which the Bachelor of Regional and Urban Planning (BRUP) program could improve student knowledge and skills.

**Considerations in designing or improving a practicum experience**

- Duration of the placement is important; longer placements are not always possible. For the ‘Day in the life of a Planner’ model, student feedback suggests that they
would prefer a longer placement – at least three days and potentially one week.

- A range of potential placements should be organised before the start of semester. Provide support with cover letters, CVs and guidance about workplace behaviour.
- Be explicit about what is required in the portfolio and reflective journal.
- Private and public sector ‘employers’ also may benefit from identifying a potential employee.
- Ensure that non-government agencies are offered opportunities to mentor students and participate in the pre-practicum student briefings. Acknowledge that employers may face substantial time and resource commitments in the practicum.

9. Other EL activities

**Description**

The introduction of EL-based activities is possible within more traditional classroom settings when guided by the EL principles. Incremental changes over time can provide opportunities for the extension of theoretical knowledge to practice-based understanding and skill development. It is important that these changes progress in complexity and are guided by the educator in order that the students clearly understand the purpose of each activity and its relevance to their future professional career in the ‘real world’. Further, strong links between EL activities and assessment, whether formative and summative, provide motivation for student engagement. Similarly, the learning activities and assessment need to be aligned to the intended learning outcomes of the program/course in order to secure the most opportunity for student learning.

**Case Study 17: EL activities in a classroom with diverse student cohort (USC)**

This case study focuses on a semester-long course taught using a weekly two-hour lecture and one-hour tutorial with 65–75 students. The one-hour tutorial is highly structured so opportunity for integrated EL is taken up within the two-hour lecture timeslot. The content of the course explores how rural and regional areas are shaped by societies and their unique environments, taking a systems approach and examining the interplay of social, environmental and economic processes that underpin these areas and their need for a sustainable future. Approximately 15+ programs are represented in each year’s student cohort.

Three active learning activities were introduced and implemented in 2012. Firstly, storytelling used a narrative pedagogy in which students listen to ‘real world’ stories of how rural and regional people or places coped with recent challenges. There is space for a dialogue between teacher/students and student/student, with opportunities for students to reflect on what they would do in similar situations. The students also carried out informal tasks in small groups (Weeks 6 and 11). The first activity involves students as part of a simulated community consultation process during the development of a real government policy. The students work in small groups to critique the suggested strategy and discuss other potential options that may be more suitable. One student then delivers the group’s finding to the rest of the class. The second small group activity requires students to discuss the relationship between social, economic and environmental sustainability and to suggest innovative
strategies that would improve the future sustainability of rural and regional spaces. This exercise builds on the semester’s work and provides clarity for students in thinking and writing about their final major report (Formal Assessment Task). Guest presenters (Weeks 8 and 10) share their experiences with the students, providing insights from their particular career focus. The main aim is to provide a practitioner point of view on the topics from the course and allow students to ask questions and reflect on the presentations during the rest of the lecture or at the following tutorial.

**Considerations in working with diverse cohorts of students**

- Any mix of experiential learning can be built into a course. However, the course designer needs to be clear about the purpose and context for each activity so they link together over time to step student learning from the basic concepts and skills to the more complex. This is particularly important when the students’ prior learning varies considerable.
- Ongoing guidance and support by the teacher is particularly important when students come from multiple disciplinary backgrounds.
- Using a variety of contexts worked well in the USC case study to engage students in the learning process.
- The majority of students understood how the activities connected theory to practice and exemplified the complexity of current issues around sustainability.
- It is important to factor in additional time for reflection immediately after the activity so that students have a structured opportunity for basic reflection.

**5.2: Applying the principles to case studies**

As outlined previously, the principles identified from the literature review guided the redesign of courses to better include EL. The principles were also subsequently used to assess the effectiveness of learning activities. The following section provides for reflection about the combined findings of the case studies in terms of each EL principle, noting that insights about each principle should, ideally, drive the making of EL activities.

**Purposeful**

This principle underscores the need for EL learning activities to be well-considered, well-designed and well-delivered. A common learning from the project across partner universities was that EL requires more and possibly different kinds of time, energy and organisation than traditional learning modes, such as lectures and tutorials. The purpose of often novel learning activities needs to be clearly explained to students and these activities need to involve planning practitioners; therefore, the teachers themselves should have a clear understanding of what the activity is designed to achieve.

The evidence was supported by both positive and negative experiences. For example, the case studies conducted on the use of guest speakers consistently highlighted that students need to be informed as to the purpose of the guest presentation, and guest speakers need to be guided in terms of how their presentation fits with the course. This guidance especially includes the structuring of learning activities so that they reinforce other key principles of EL. In the case study involving an introductory course to planning, students revealed in their
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journal that they saw no benefit from a visit to a well-planned shopping centre. This reinforced the need for the educator to clearly explain the purpose and provide more guidance about learning outcomes. For example, planners are taught that they should not make a decision without a site visit.

In all years of study, but particularly the early years, the purpose of an activity needs to be spelled out clearly by the educator. In a final year practicum, each student operates in a different context so the responsibility for defining the purpose rests more with the student with guidance from the educator.

**Student-centred**

Researchers on this project agreed that it is almost impossible not to put the student more at the centre of learning when using EL. By final year, students are developing their own criteria for reflection; they become more active in their learning, embodying a much richer student-centred experience. The focus shifts to students making their own observations as they demonstrate more confidence in their ability to do things, and have increased capacity. In early years, students often receive support in developing their skills. Textbooks can help with consistency and guidance can ensure that students do not go off track or undertake bad practice.

**Theory-practice dialectic**

The theory-practice dialectic develops over the years of study and is the epitome of Kolb’s model. Students need to establish a basis of understanding and knowledge about planning in the early years in order to inform their understanding of practice. This concept draws on students’ current understanding and extends it beyond the classroom. In all case studies, aspects of theory were applied to practice. At times, the students’ perceptions of how processes and concepts work were challenged by ‘real’ practice.

In many situations, practice also informed the theory. For example, in the case study where students designed children’s playgrounds, students first learned about how children play and then applied that in their designs. The ability to make practice-theory linkages improves as students advance through the program and provides a basis for reflective and self-directed learning in their eventual graduate practice.

**Exposure to the real world**

Exposing students to a real world context is core to EL. It would be difficult to teach certain things without exposing students to the relevant environment. For example, exposing students to children’s play was essential for designing a playground, and introduced students to a segment of society with which they and professional planners might not normally engage. They documented existing practice, worked for a client and addressed their needs for designing playground infrastructure. These activities draw students into contemporary issues and challenge them to provide professional solutions. Students benefit from feedback about their professionalism and completed tasks. Such exposure can include a creative value of tension and be transformative. Students on an international field trip, for example, took an interdisciplinary subject which challenged their identity, taking them out of their comfort zone, and increasing their confidence of being able to deal with complex and new issues.
**Guided practice**
Over the duration of the program, activities become more complex with explicit guidance by educators becoming less structured. Simulation or studios can help progress students within a safe environment. Within a classroom context, the educator facilitates learning from the activities and continually reinforces their application week by week. Educators need to also guide guest presenters or any other outside stakeholders or participants so their involvement is meaningful.

Guidance can be implicitly focused ‘behind the scenes’, and not obvious to the student. The role of the educator moves towards being a coach or mentor in the later years and, often, the practitioner has more influence in educating the student. Based on experience from international study tours, guidance is important because of the increasing complexity of activities and increased participation of other stakeholders. It is important to foster an analytical ability in the students so that they can critically analyse documents or contexts.

**Reflection**
One finding consistent across many case studies for different learning activities and courses was that EL demands greater attention, opportunity and time given to both formal and informal student (and teacher) reflection on learning. Because of the richness, complexity and novelty of many EL activities, students are more actively engaged in the processes of learning. The deeper thinking engendered through EL produces better quality reflections, and vice versa.

Reflection is a core aspect of EL; it is essential to Kolb’s model. Tyson and Lowe (1987) maintain that Kolb’s experiential learning model or cycle is both descriptive and prescriptive or normative. It is descriptive in the sense that it explains the reflective cognitive processes through which people learn by doing and while they are doing. It is prescriptive or normative in the sense that it implies a desirable method for learning. They also distinguish between two modalities of reflection: reflection in action where students develop abstract concepts and learn as they do something (they learn to plan, or teach, or to extract teeth, for example), and formal reflection where students are required to articulate ideas and concepts and insights gained or generated from their experience.

This raises questions about when, for example, (within Kolb’s learning cycle) it is appropriate to formally reflect on learning and what degree of assessment is most appropriate. For example, in an experiential learning exercise, students’ capacity to plan could be assessed not only by the quality of the plans prepared, but by the insights that they gain into the ethical issues of the planning process; this might require a different form of assessment that captures reflection.

The non-linear nature of EL encourages reflection. Reflection is integral to the theory-practice dialectic and the educator needs to focus on how to capture reflection on incidental learning from an exercise (theory-practice dialectic). In some cases, there is little time available for reflection. This was the problem faced in one of the planning studios where the use of Yammer was trialled specifically for this purpose. In another case, an educator commented that students enjoy documenting ethical dilemmas that arise in a practicum,
which are then suitably addressed in a reflective journal.

The case studies demonstrated different ways of capturing reflection. (See Viswanathan et al. 2012 regarding how to improve reflection.) Reflection contributes to a transformative experience which cannot necessarily be assessed by traditional means. Embodied in the concept of a pass/fail assessment is the question – Are students ready to progress to the next stage of complexity? Once educators commit to the reflective activity, they reflect more themselves. This can be potentially quite confronting to educators as their teaching and students, for whom they are responsible, are exposed to external assessment. It requires more risk management; however, it can also be rewarding.

**Evaluation**

Evaluation can be both formal and informal and by educators, peers, the self and practitioners. EL challenges the usefulness of conventional modes of evaluation. On one hand, the case studies and baseline survey revealed that a number of courses with EL activities still include traditional forms of assessment (e.g. exams, essays, written reports). However, assessment can make the most of a practical experience, for example, by encouraging student reflection on the experience and how they might adapt their knowledge to another situation. Assessment of presentations by external practitioners can significantly impress students because they realise practitioners are looking at their work from a professional perspective. Presentation to an audience outside the university environment was reported to lift the academic performance to greater extent than if students were presenting to their peers. For example, the 12-minute time frame for a guest presentation in one case suddenly became important as students realised that a visitor’s time was limited.

**Community-university partnership**

A core aspect of EL is the mutual benefit derived from community-university interaction. Many of the case studies involve an external partner. In a studio course, guest speakers from Council and financiers address issues such as risk assessment and the track record of developers. In another case, a GIS expert lectured and organised a field trip.

There can be tension as the practitioner strives to provide a real experience that is meaningful, yet not too overwhelming for the students and not out of step with the purpose of the learning exercise.

Practitioners genuinely feel they have something to offer and want to contribute to student learning. It is seen as a chance for them to upgrade their theoretical knowledge. Some practitioners are keen for the option to be involved in less demanding activities with universities as a guest speaker, rather than having students in placements. While it is essential for practica to have willing partners, these are sometimes hard to find. Practitioners also need to benefit.

Mutual benefits were evident in these case studies in the partnerships with each school about playground design. In yet another case, an NGO gained information about how the local community perceived their proposed development. Feedback from another ‘client’ was that they appreciated the creativity and imagination used by students in scenario
planning which governments and councils felt constrained to use. In a couple of cases, students were able to give feedback to a client that practitioners did not feel they could give; however, the students could.

5.3: Improving assessment as a result of case studies

The series of case studies undertaken as part of the project resulted in four major outcomes in relation to improving assessment:

- the need for assessment types and evaluation methods appropriate to the complex and potentially transformative nature of EL activities situated in ‘real world’ contexts
- identification of a wide range of EL assessment tasks that are more student-centred and adaptive but unconventional and, therefore, less well developed or fostered by teaching/learning policy and university administration
- the capacity to capture unexpected outcomes through individual and/or group reflective practice
- acknowledgement that assessment provides motivation for students to participate in an activity and learning; however, informal formative assessments can and should be used to reinforce learning.

Diversity of assessment

EL generates a broader more holistic view of what can and should constitute assessment. Because the learning is undertaken in new and innovative ways – at times physically away from the conventional classroom setting – different forms of assessment are more likely to be needed, such as reflective journals, playing a role and showing evidence of listening. EL can produce assessments that are more student-centred; students may more effectively demonstrate knowledge and learning by means other than conventional essays, written assessments and tests. Many students perform differently with EL because they are more motivated to learn than in more than conventional learning situations.

In an international field trip case study students were exposed to a wide range of activities that forced them to extend themselves (e.g. through street interviews). Assessment tasks sought to match and reflect the diversity of these experiences across the duration of the field trip (e.g. three blog entries –before, during, and after).

EL assessment often requires progressive assessment so that the educator is able to adapt the forms and types of assessment to the circumstances and the learning that is being observed. Each individual student’s progress needs to be assessed consistently over the course of their degree in order to gauge the transformational learning that has taken place whilst the student is meeting a required level of competency. Traditional forms of assessment are often context-neutral and do not appear to fit logically with an EL activity. Correspondingly, EL allows the teacher to consider and introduce a suite of different assessment types as appropriate to the range of activities. Assessment criteria need to be equitable for all students and require contextualisation, particularly in work-based activities.
Additionally, there are tensions regarding EL that arise when questions over assessment are considered. It is not easy to assess EL due to the complexity of the learning activities and the often unexpected and emerging outcomes that can eventuate. Questions arise about what criteria for assessment should be used to measure, for example, the increased self-confidence that often develops from student exposure to new experiences in international field studies, or the tacit social and political skills evident from work placements. Project partners became aware that great care needs to be taken to design assessment tasks that do justice to the diversity and depth of learning that many students experience in EL activities.

**Using reflection with assessment**

Guided reflective practices linked to assessment enable students to use concrete experiences to measure their performance within a given context in order to optimise the benefits for application to future experiences.

Assessments in the case studies include reflection on experiences and observations, preparation for and participation in mock events, presentations to organisations and external stakeholders, video productions, site visit reports, and diaries of practica or work experiences. Team members found, in some cases, that guided reflection through dialogue with the educator or directed worksheets enhanced effective learning. However, despite these observations about the innovation associated with EL, the survey of EL across universities and the case studies identified that much EL assessment still relies extensively on conventional types of assessment.

In addition, institutional requirements can limit the types of assessment available. Because of its very nature, EL can be harder to encapsulate in a series of intended learning outcomes and, therefore, it is harder to measure whether those learning outcomes have been achieved. Important features of assessment in EL can run counter to or even be stifled by policy or attempts in higher education to standardise all assessments and conduct assessment through a formulaic measurement that can be easily reported for either an internal or external audience. Institutional requirements can limit types of assessments available. For instance, reflection is often not seen as valuable as a standard essay approach. The project team noted that, unless properly designed, the tertiary education system’s philosophy and projected future – enrol more students in larger classes and increasingly use blended learning – often runs counter to the very nature of EL and, ironically, contradicts other broad policy directions by government, universities and employers to produce ‘work-ready’ graduates.

**Linking EL activities to assessment motivates student engagement**

Several of the case studies demonstrated that students’ motivation to participate and learn from EL activities was enhanced if linked to assessment tasks. For example, in one of the case studies students did not participate in a site visit field trip that was not linked to assessment. Similarly, it was found that students did not complete a reflective diary unless it was linked to assessment. Whilst the project team are not seeking to further embed assessment *per se* as the main motivation for learning – indeed, students are already hypersensitive about the amount of assessment – the findings from case studies tend to reinforce existing insights from Biggs and Tang (2007) about the learning benefits that accrue from
the constructive alignment of intended learning outcomes, activities and assessment tasks.

This may reflect the nature and circumstances of the student and their other time pressures (e.g. from paid work). Further, EL creates situations where students find that they are more responsible for their own learning. For instance, in practica or work experience, the student spends considerable time away from the classroom and their peers, and much of their learning is taking place in a situation where the conventional control mechanisms of a higher education setting are not present.

Not every EL activity needs to be assessed but EL can and should purposefully contribute in some formative way to an assessment task. Several activities in one course can be linked but only one assessed. Students need to be made aware of the connection between the EL activity and the corresponding assessment. For example, classroom EL activities explained in the composite case study can be successful as formative steps towards future assessment if the students understand the purpose and relevance of the activity. Even guest lectures at the university-based end of the EL activity continuum can be linked to short formative assessment tasks that align with intended learning outcomes and larger assessment tasks. Informal assessment was used in a case study of guest speakers where students were asked to write a two minute essay about the take home message from the lecture to reinforce their learning.

**Using group work**

Group work emerged as a significant element of many EL activities as it represents an attempt to replicate real life work situations, yet numerous case studies identified issues with students working collectively. Some students find group work simultaneously enriching and challenging. Other students experience group work as traumatising, yet excel when presented with team tasks.

The case studies demonstrate what is widely known among planning educators, that many students dislike group work due to expectation of unfair evaluation. Lazy or poor students are often seen as using group work to avoid individual effort ('free-rider') while competent and active students resent those who contribute little; they feel they are carrying the group and that their grade will be dragged down by other students. In addition, group exercises often involve ‘work’ that requires different sorts of skills (i.e. organisational, social, practical) on top of the content of the work, and students have a sense that this is not reflected in the weighting of assessment.

However, group work provides essential learning opportunities. For example, students involved in the UTAS' work for client/mini-studio' commented:

> This was one of the harder group projects I have experienced. It can be very difficult to complete the amount and quality of work required when others lack initiative or feel uncomfortable speaking up.
Perhaps cultural differences led to variable contributions in terms of local knowledge, ideas and leadership. Being able to reflect on this when problems arose was useful, and I think I developed some empathy and acceptance of the range of capacities as the project went on.

and

I really enjoyed working with other students to achieve a group product. I felt I learned a lot from the group – in terms of different approaches to the problem – and I was able to learn more about my own strengths and weaknesses.

Notwithstanding great diversity in individual responses, patterned issues of particular relevance to EL include:

- Group work is highly valued by students for the exposure it provides to complex real world contexts and situations – a key principle of EL. However, students often need greater guidance from teaching staff and planning practitioners about the skills needed to negotiate and ‘do’ group work. This suggests that more attention should be given to the general processes of groups themselves rather than to the particular content of the work that groups are set to achieve. These group processes could include ground rules for individual member participation and feedback channels to the teaching staff available to students when groups are not functioning effectively.

- International students in particular find group work highly rewarding and deeply challenging – perhaps, on both accounts – because of the implicit but often unarticulated culturally-specific competencies required (and assumed) in much group work.

One response to this dilemma might be to increase the weighting of group work yet to ensure both group and individual assessment of the learning activity. Making the group assessment task worth less in terms of actual marks but more in terms of ‘peer assessment’ was found to work well, as it can appropriately allocate social consequences but with little effect on marks e.g. a group oral presentation to others in class and also to other staff/practitioners.

5.4: Benefits and challenges of experiential learning from the case studies

Benefits from EL

This project expanded the scope of EL beyond the traditional work placement to incorporate and give structure and validity to a much broader range of activities both inside and outside the classroom. Some of these activities are a major part of a course and its assessment; others are components that contribute to the learning experience and outcomes.

The case studies and the evaluation of student experiences and their learning by the students themselves have clearly demonstrated the value of EL. The overwhelming evidence from the 17 case studies is that students enjoy EL and are more enthusiastic and engaged. Students see the value of these activities and their relevance to future practice; it can be challenging but they get through it and have a sense of achievement. Students feel that they
learn a lot and some students say that it accelerates their learning. For example, postgraduate students at the University of Tasmania commented about their 'work for a client' experience: 'I also discovered how exciting it can be to work on an interesting, novel project and feel like I have greatly contributed'. Even with the more university-based guest speakers, fourth year students at the University of the Sunshine Coast commented that the speakers 'had many years of knowledge and practical examples' that illustrated the sometime 'disconnect between policy and outcomes on the ground and need for consistency between different levels of policy'. They became inspired: 'Planning can make a difference'. Likewise students in Griffith University's studio course found it challenging but 'the amount I learned was phenomenal'. Externally conducted exit surveys of graduates report that studios are considered by students as one of the best aspects of the Griffith University planning program.

Students learn skills and knowledge that they could not learn any other way. For example, a student placed through the University of the Sunshine Coast work practicum, stated:

I was working with a community planner [who] used informal power and her personal influence very effectively in achieving project outcomes – important because she had no formal authority such as a planning scheme or Council decision behind her. She also managed group discussions (framing for good), preparing groups beforehand and ensuring the conversations remained neutral in discussing potentially conflicting issues.

EL expands opportunities for learning and exposes students to issues with which they have never dealt. For example, students from the regional La Trobe University based in Bendigo examined large North American cities on their international study tour. They learned about strategies to rejuvenate the cities, the different roles of local government and fiscal arrangements between different levels of government. One student commented:

Looking back over the study tour I now have a different perspective in my arsenal when addressing planning in both urban and rural aspects ... different growth patterns are clearly visible in relation to history, heritage, space, economy and culture amongst the many views that constitute how a city is to function and ultimately develop.

All researchers participating in this project agree that one of the major benefits of increasing the amount of experiential learning activities in a course and across a planning program has been greater student self-confidence in dealing with complex issues. Student feedback in reflection surveys and comments back to educators demonstrates that students believe they are developing professional competencies and that their learning is relevant to their future careers, because it relates to professional practice. They also comment on some of the challenges they experience while engaged in specific activities, but note that they feel a special sense of achievement when they successfully complete a challenging task. Students also comment positively on the benefits of expanded opportunities for learning (more field trips, international trips and more engagement with the community) as reflected in the comments below:
I now find that I am much more confident. When we do group work I can usually tell the students who haven’t been on an international study tour because they are not as confident and organised in working out what we need to do.

Within half an hour of getting back to Australia from my international study tour my partner said ‘What happened on the study tour because I can tell you are much more confident and assertive than you were before’.

However, this transformation is one of many benefits that is not assessed or is difficult to assess. At Edith Cowan University, a student who recognised the value of work-integrated learning commented: 'It's made me very confident in approaching organisations and producing professional CVs'. The educator observed that students who were more self-confident, willing to contribute to group meetings and had more life experience, recorded more benefits from the placements. Some students who had initially been lacking in confidence and motivation and had found the experience overwhelming and intimidating, stated that they had developed a range of skills which had improved their self-confidence and employability. Similarly, students of the University of the Sunshine Coast practicum expressed confidence that they felt well-prepared for work in planning offices. These students overwhelmingly believed it was the best experience of their degree.

Students gained a better understanding of career opportunities and areas of planning that might interest them. In response to guest speakers at USC, students commented: 'It made me think about going into the compliance area of planning. I didn't know it existed'. Other comments were: 'Planners can have multiple roles. You don’t need to know exactly where you go in the planning field. You can easily move between private and public sectors and not stay in one area of planning'. Not only do students and the university benefit from interaction with the external community, but clients commented on the mutual benefit. At UTAS, a client commented: 'I was surprised what the students came up with as a fresh set of eyes looking at the problem'. The client commented that the interaction with students expanded the notion of what they could do. For example, a Council officer said: 'We have not really used GIS as an analysis tool'; and 'It helped me to better understand what my role [as a GIS practitioner within Council] can be'.

Because planning courses are accredited by the profession, practitioners support these types of activities. For example, employers were willing to give generous support in hosting ECU planning students in order to fulfil the course requirements, with one practitioner indicating that: 'It looks cool on the resume'. Most industry participants had a positive experience with their students and were supportive of hosting others in future. Involved in the UTAS program, a client said: 'There is value in the networking and the connections ... one of the students is now coming back to do her professional placement with us'.

**Challenges with EL**

On the other hand, there are challenges for educators who wish to use an experiential learning approach. All researchers in this project found that more preparation is involved. For example, field trips require risk assessment. Extra preparation was involved with the UTAS Work for a client/mini-studio. To work with a school and students on the playground,
the educator had to organise ethics approval and all students needed a 'blue card' (a system used by Australian state governments to register people working with children and young people to minimise risk from harm). It raises the issue of the complexity of training students in how to work with diverse communities: age, culture, disability, and Indigeneity. Similarly, the USC Work for a client project where students organised community consultation for an NGO, required ethics approval. Because it had to be well-executed, it involved management of risk by the educator through intensive guidance of the students, and regular contact with the client.

Extra preparation is also required in preparing learning materials. As teaching involves interaction with real world issues which constantly change, so too the learning materials must constantly change. The same clients and field sites may not be relevant or able to be used every year. Case studies need to be constantly updated. Each activity requires considerable preparation, liaison with the external community, and extra time above and beyond normal lecture preparation and marking. As a result, if the course is taught by sessional assistants, the university may not allocate sufficient time in a standard teaching contract: sessional assistants are not usually paid before classes start and they are paid according to a formula that involves teaching and marking time. This also has implications for staff workload negotiations.

Students expect that they will have professional skills at the end of the degree; however, an observation from this team is that some students find real world exposure to be quite challenging. In some cases, work may need to be done with the community before students begin working in the area. In other cases, more student preparation may be needed to ensure that they understand how to work ethically and respectfully in the community. This requires extra time by the educator to support the students and time to work with the guest speaker or client ahead of time to make sure they understand the educational context and requirements of the interaction. External clients need to understand the time frames involved in a course, so that students are able to meet their assessment deadlines.

In addition, EL can introduce additional costs associated with field trips, public displays and various materials. While students are often asked to contribute, to provide equal opportunities much of the cost needs to be subsidised by the university. This is of concern in a time of budget constraints felt at most universities.

While universities have demonstrated a commitment to work-integrated learning, the project team believes that, unless it is underpinned by an experiential learning approach and appropriate reflection in the years prior to the work experience, students may not achieve the learning outcomes. Experiential learning activities need to be well-designed with opportunities for reflection provided so that students are quite clear about what they have learned and how it contributes to learning outcomes for the course and overall program. However, given the heavy time demands of EL, to provide a theoretical grounding as well as provide for the experience, it can be challenging to allow sufficient opportunity for reflection.
As mentioned in section 5.3, group work proved a difficult issue to deal with in core planning courses, particularly with students from other programs that do not have a tradition of experiential activities. In this project, this was a feature in several courses in which group work was used as part of an experiential learning activity. Reflection needs to be well-structured in this type of course.

In conclusion, the seventeen case studies provided an opportunity to apply and test the effectiveness of the eight EL principles. Feedback from students, the external community, and the project team provided a better understanding of learning outcomes, as well as the benefits and the challenges of EL.
Chapter 6: Implications of research for PIA accreditation policy

Many professions such as medicine, architecture and engineering require tertiary education programs to produce graduates as ‘work-ready’ employees with skills and knowledge at an appropriate accredited standard. Professional bodies review curricula, faculty expertise and evidence of teaching outcomes to assess standards of content, teaching and learning. Planning program reviews in Australasia generally take place every five years. Students not only accept, but also expect, that professional bodies will have a say in their education to help ensure their employability in the field.

However, to date, it could be argued that the criteria used by the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), in its Accreditation Policy (PIA 2010) to assess planning schools, have not given sufficient weight to the contribution made by experiential learning (EL) to the development of graduate attributes. EL is generally only referred to in the narrow sense of work experience or of a practicum. While visiting boards raise it as an important issue, it is usually seen as desirable but not essential.

6.1: Current Australian Planning School accreditation requirements

Curricula and pedagogy in Australian planning programs are significantly influenced by the PIA Accreditation Policy (PIA 2010). The current policy provisions reflect international practice with the Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI, 2012) and the American Planning Association (APA, 2012) both expecting planning programs to establish relationships with professional planners and provide a variety of practical experience opportunities (practica) which may result in ‘professional placements’ (RTPI) or ‘internships’ (APA). These professional institutes recognise that work experience may not always be available. However, it is expected that a good planning program should be able to offer some kind of alternative experience if work placements are not offered within the program.

In Australia, several studies have identified the importance of practical experience in the education of planners. The 2004 National Enquiry into Planning Education and Employment (PIA, 2004, p. 17) recognised that young planners in particular value the inclusion of a compulsory work experience as part of a planning degree. Gurran et al. (2008) go further, recommending industry support for work placements, scholarships and cadetships. They believe that:

> It is critical to ensure that students engage with some form of meaningful professional experience and have the opportunity to reflect on this experience during the course of their planning degree. Alternative models to structure this experience deserve further discussion and debate, in the context of PIA’s educational policy and accreditation requirements (Gurran et al. 2008, p. 44).

In late 2010, the PIA adopted a substantially revised Accreditation Policy for the Recognition of Australian Planning Qualifications for the Urban and Regional Planning Chapter (amended in 2011). The policy forms the basis for submissions by universities for accreditation of
planning programs and for their assessment by Visiting Boards. The Policy adopts a
demonstration of competencies model and uses a performance-based approach for what a
university must demonstrate in order to attain/retain accreditation. For instance, as the
Policy (PIA 2010, p. 8) states:

The listing of competency objectives and performance outcomes is designed to
allow flexibility for programs to develop their own strengths and specialisations,
while maintaining relative certainty to the university, the community and to the
Institute that professional standards are being met. The performance outcomes
are provided as qualitative indicators to guide those responsible as to the
intended scope and direction of the respective competencies and not as absolute
prescriptions. In defining the core, it is recognised that spatial/land use issues are
the key element. Associated with this element are plan making and plan
implementation/administration processes.

The current PIA accreditation policy does not use the term ‘experiential learning’ preferring
the term ‘practical experience’ and, further, does not require an institution to provide
practical experience. It does, however, make reference to the desirability of ‘work-
integrated learning’ and states that ‘practical work is considered to be a key means of
delivery of practice, professionalism and aspects of ethics’ (PIA, 2011, p. 8). The policy thus
recognises that practical experience can include a variety of methods and approaches. The
assumption is that practical experience will include some form of professional work
experience but the Policy states that where this is not provided ‘the Visiting Board will
consider prepared, supervised, and reflective work-integrated learning that forms part of
the educational curriculum to demonstrate how skills, knowledge and competencies
obtained through work experience are acquired’ (PIA, 2011, p. 8). The generality of the
wording reflects a rather imprecise definition of opportunities that can be grouped under
the umbrella of ‘experiential learning’ and which have now been more fully elaborated by
our project.

With reference to ‘practical experience’, the current policy includes the following
statement:

Practical Experience
The Institute endorses a combination of academic planning education and
appropriate models of work or practical experience. Practical experience can be
gained through a variety of methods. These include practical studies of a
supervised nature, structured workplace placements, or appropriately
supervised project involvements. The Policy recognises that there is no single
“model” of practical experience. Practical work is considered to be a key means
of delivery of practice, professionalism and aspects of ethics. The Policy looks to
ensure that planning programs have a clear and well-reasoned structure and
approach to practical work. Where professional work experience is a formal
requirement of a qualification, the Visiting Board will evaluate the quality and
supervision of the work experience. It will seek to ensure that it assists in the
acquisition of core knowledge and skills. Where a program does not include a
formal requirement for professional work experience, the Visiting Board will
consider prepared, supervised and reflective work-integrated learning that forms part of the educational curriculum to demonstrate how skills, knowledge and competencies obtained through work experience are acquired (PIA, 2010, p. 8).

The current accreditation policy provisions could be significantly improved by the inclusion of criteria by which the quality of both professional work experience and work-integrated learning alternatives may be assessed by Visiting Boards.

Members of the project team workedshopped project outcomes to extract insights that could inform the planning school accreditation process delivered by PIA. The main question identified was how to recognise and evaluate the benefits of EL in relation to planning graduate attributes.

6.2: PIA accreditation policy: Recommendations for change

Based on the outcomes of this project, the project team believes EL should be an integral element of each year of an accredited planning program. Thus, in seeking accreditation, a university needs to be able to demonstrate how it is using EL across the four-year program, with courses in each year building in greater complexity and exposure to real world experiences. EL could be evidenced through a range of activities, from guest lectures, field trips, role plays and design studios related to a ‘real’ site or client. While study tours or international field trips would not be mandatory, their value as a transformative experience should also be recognised. Early in a planning degree, EL could include shadowing a professional planner for a few days, or experiencing a ‘Day in the life of a Planner’. The culmination of an EL approach to learning and teaching might be a latter year structured work experience under guidance of a professional planner, accompanied by formal assessment.

The project team proposes that, in order for an activity to be considered to provide EL, it should be underpinned and informed by the following eight principles, described in Attachment 2:

1. purposeful
2. student-centred
3. theory-practice dialectic
4. real world context
5. guided practice
6. reflection
7. evaluation, and
8. community-university partnership.

Several of these principles are attributes of good learning and teaching generally, such as 'student-centred' and 'purposeful', but the team suggests that others, such as a dialogical exchange between theory and practice, and ‘reflection’ are core to EL. The process of reflection involves an individual exploring their past or present experiences in order to gain new insights and understanding (Boud et al., 1989). Learning the skills of self-assessment through reflection on EL whilst at university establishes a lifelong practice for graduates to
meet their own learning needs (Boud 2000). As such, either formal or informal assessment of student learning during or linked to an EL activity, contributes significantly to effective learning.

Many of the principles, such as ‘real world context’, ‘theory-practice dialectic’ and ‘community-university partnerships’, as well as ‘reflection’, have the combined effect of reframing practice settings (such as workplaces) as valid sites for learning, further encouraging an ethos of lifelong and self-directed learning. Well-designed EL activities delivered through universities train people in how to learn for life, as well as being an effective way to deliver ‘content’.

For example, a field trip or site visit that incorporates guided learning about planning issues or techniques could be classified as EL, but might not be assessed, other than through group reflection on observations shared at the end of the field trip. However, the field trip might be core to the development of an assignment, a policy, code or design, which is then formally assessed.

Feedback from the student surveys of EL activities is that these learning outcomes cannot be achieved in any other way. The benefits of integrating EL throughout a tertiary planning program are that this approach:

- improves student confidence about having the skills to be able to deal with complex issues evident in everyday practice of planning
- exposes students to issues of diversity of communities such as age, gender, culture, disability, and Indigeneity.
- contributes to graduate attributes desired by prospective employers such as communication, teamwork and critical thinking.

Developing effective EL activities, however, takes additional time and effort by educators. If this is not recognised in accreditation processes, then it could jeopardise the uptake and integration of an EL approach into the planning curriculum.

The first suggestion is that experiential learning be more explicitly defined for the purposes of PIA accreditation policy. Draft suggested wording to replace the existing statement which is reproduced above (Current Policy) is as follows:

**Experiential Learning**

*The Institute endorses a combination of academic planning education and experiential learning. Experiential learning includes activities described in various ways, such as service, practice, outreach, engagement, ‘cooperative’ education, and workplace or work-integrated learning, all of which are purposefully designed to broaden students’ learning experiences through exposure to real planning issues and practice both inside and outside of the university. The Policy recognises that there is no single “model” or approach to experiential learning, which can embody a variety of methods and tasks including:*

- guest speakers (with qualification)
The Policy looks to ensure that planning programs have a clear and well-reasoned structure and approach to experiential learning as a key means for the delivery of practice, professionalism and aspects of ethics. In order for an activity to be considered to provide experiential learning it should meet most, if not all, of the following principles or elements:

- purposeful
- student-centred
- theory-practice dialectic
- real world context
- guided practice
- reflection
- evaluation, and
- community-university partnership.

Where professional work experience is a formal requirement of a qualification, the Visiting Board will evaluate the quality and supervision of the work experience. It will seek to ensure that it assists in the acquisition of core knowledge and skills. Where a program does not include a formal requirement for professional work experience, the Visiting Board will consider prepared, supervised and reflective work-integrated learning that forms part of the educational curriculum to demonstrate how practical skills, knowledge and competencies obtained.

Table 6.1 below sets out in more detail statements in the existing PIA accreditation policy referring to practical experience and makes suggestions for change, where relevant, in the light of the findings of this project. It is generally proposed that word revisions to the accreditation policy would enable better recognition and acceptance of experiential learning.

**Table 6.1 Other suggested word changes to the PIA Accreditation Policy**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Wording in existing PIA accreditation policy</th>
<th>Comments about change</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The Institute endorses a combination of academic planning education and appropriate models of work or practical experience.</td>
<td>Suggested change: Add: ‘and experiential learning’ to provide a more all-embracing definition and scope.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Practical experience can be gained through a</td>
<td>Suggested change:</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
variety of methods – practical studies of a supervised nature, structured workplace placements, or appropriately supervised project involvements. | Add: methods such as guest lectures, simulated developments, field trips – provided they meet the set of EL principles.

The Policy recognises that there is no single ‘model’ of practical experience. | Suggested change: The Policy recognises that there is no single ‘model’ of experiential learning and practical experience.

Practical work is considered to be a key means of delivery of practice, professionalism and aspects of ethics. | Suggested change: Experiential learning is considered to be a key means of delivery of practice, professionalism and aspects of ethics.

The Policy looks to ensure that planning programs have a clear and well-reasoned structure and approach to practical work. | Suggested change: The Policy seeks to ensure that planning programs have a clear, reasoned and well-structured approach to experiential learning.

Where professional work experience is a formal requirement of a qualification, the Visiting Board will evaluate the quality and supervision of the work experience. It will seek to ensure that it assists in the acquisition of core knowledge and skills. | Retain current wording and add... and makes provision for reflection on the theory-practice dialectic.

Where a program does not include a formal requirement for professional work experience, the Visiting Board will consider prepared, supervised, and reflective work-integrated learning that forms part of the educational curriculum to demonstrate how skills, knowledge and competencies obtained through work experience are acquired. | Retain current wording except replace ‘work-integrated learning’ with ‘experiential learning’.

**PIA Reward for practitioners**

Currently, the 2005 PIA policy for Professional Development (PD) addresses ongoing lifelong learning in the workplace. PD is compulsory for corporate members of the PIA, and members are expected to accumulate 60 PD points over a consecutive two-year period in at least two categories of activities, with a minimum of 20 points achieved each year. Involvement in planning education generally falls across three areas: conferences, seminars, lectures and study tours; informal learning activities: and profession and community service. The latter ‘involves committee and other services aimed at developing the planning profession, including service on formal committees of PIA, involvement in editorial and peer review activities, involvement in formal mentoring of graduate planners which contribute to the continuing professional development of others, and input to overseas aid projects’ (PIA, 2005, p. 3). Members generally gain 1 PD point/hour for each activity. However, their efforts may gain 2 PD points/per hour if the learning environment and activities achieved require greater effort and outcomes.
At present, members seeking to have 2 PD points/hour allocated for any of their PD activities need to provide the following information about the PD activity and, in the past, the National Education Manager determined the appropriate PD points category and points allocation:

- name and date of activity
- a brief description of the activity
- the member’s contribution to the activity (participant, presenter, author etc.)
- duration of the activity
- any brochures, course outlines, web links etc. of the activity details which may provide additional further information.

The development of a long-term relationship between practitioners and educators is seen as a crucial aspect of experiential learning resulting in potential new forms of education and research (Boud and Solomon 2001). The involvement of practitioners in the education of planners should also be designed to increase flexibility of work-based learning and customise further education.

Planning practitioners have supported tertiary planning programs for a number of years, through involvement in experiential learning opportunities for students such as guest lectures, role play, acting as the client in a project, hosting a student as part of a practicum or work experience. However, there is little recognition of that work as part of the Institute’s Continuing Professional Development program. As the PD policy is reviewed by the PIA, it would be useful to formalise ways in which practitioners could gain PD points and at what level. Such recognition would provide an additional incentive for practitioners to support tertiary planning education, enhance work-based experience opportunities for students; and achieve PD opportunities for their contribution.

While it is difficult to determine any revisions to the allocation of PD points without further consultation, it is clear that the current system does not sufficiently reward practitioner involvement in planning education. As a starting point for discussion, it is proposed that educational functions such as guest lecturing, guiding field trips, mentoring, and direct supervision of work placed students gain 2 PD points/hour with a maximum of 5 points per activity. That is, two guest lectures of one hour each at separate times might generate 10 PD points. Ten points may be generated by mentoring a student in a practicum. At some universities, professional mentors are given a certificate, which could then be submitted as evidence of supervising a student practicum experience for 4 weeks.
Chapter 7: Dissemination of project outcomes

7.1: Facilitating dissemination and uptake of project outcomes

The project team carefully considered McKenzie and Alexander (2006), the Carrick report by Southwell et al. (2005), and the D-cubed project (Hinton et al., 2011), in considering how to achieve effective dissemination of project results. (See Appendix E: Dissemination workshop PowerPoints and Dissemination Strategy.) Workshops and website resources are recognised as essential components for dissemination and uptake according to a previous project by Owen and Stupans (2009). Dissemination strategies used in the ALTC-funded Barraket et al. (2009) project, such as tailored reports for stakeholder groups, were considered.

It was agreed that an online toolkit, newsletters and presentations at planning conferences would best reach key stakeholder groups in the planning profession and in tertiary planning education programs. In addition, once the online toolkit is completed, the project team would work with learning and teaching divisions of universities with planning schools to workshop the project outcomes and gain feedback on the online toolkit.

The initial dissemination actions focused on the project partner institutions with the first and second workshops (30-31 March 2012; 31 January – 1 February 2013) stimulating discussion, reflection, identification of challenges and the collaborative enhancement of the Experiential Learning Framework and its components. The intention was to build on existing understanding of experiential learning tools and techniques, embedding the project outcomes in planning school learning and teaching strategies. Thus, a critical element of the project was the establishment of a knowledge network that involved all tertiary planning schools engaged through the project’s Baseline survey, RePlan (the planning educators’ e-network) and participants at the 2011, 2012 and 2013 Australian and New Zealand Association of Planning Schools (ANZAPS) conferences.

A key aspect was also to involve professional practitioners who contribute to individual accredited planning programs through their role on School Planning Advisory Committees (referred to by different names at each institution). These usually comprise representatives from the planning and related professions, recent graduates and current students. At least one member is usually a representative of the relevant state division of the PIA. Each team member presented the project to its advisory body.

Professional practitioners also influence planning education through their roles on PIA national and state education committees. However, as a result of a number of changes in membership and roles of the national education committee, the meeting with the national PIA education committee (PLAN) was brief, and there was no decision made about how the suggestions for change might feed back to the PIA Board of Directors. Possible changes in the PIA committee structure might facilitate the recommendations of this project. Each contributing planning school aimed to disseminate project material through their membership on relevant State PIA Education Committees. Some states, such as Queensland, have strong PIA Education Committees but in other states, such as Tasmania and Western Australia, the education committee seldom meets or is nonexistent. As a result, the use of
newsletters on the project website, RePlan, and the 2013 national PIA conference became more important as dissemination activities. The rationale for engaging these stakeholders is outlined in Table 7.1 below.

Each contributing planning school also aimed to disseminate the research outcomes and resources through their university learning and teaching forums.

The online toolkit provides resources for planning schools outside the partnership to enhance their understanding of and improve their current practice in providing experiential learning. The project will facilitate uptake of outcomes through providing training on use of the framework, curriculum activities and assessment options, through sharing case studies on how use of the framework to improve teaching and experiential learning. The launch of the toolkit on the website occurred towards the end of the project through RePlan, and through targeted emails to the leader of each Australian and New Zealand planning program. This launch was accompanied by training in the use of the toolkit through visits to Learning and Teaching forums associated with a number of Australian university Planning programs early in 2014.

Refereed papers are being produced for journals such as Australian Planner (accepted for publication), Journal of Planning Education and Research (under review), Planning Theory and Practice, Journal of Education in the Built Environment, Higher Education and Research, and the Asia-Pacific Journal of Cooperative Education.

The engagement of key stakeholders and the benefits of their being involved in the ELIP project are summarised in Table 7.1; details of dissemination events are in Appendix E.

Table 7.1: Methods for engaging stakeholders, benefits to stakeholders, and limitations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stakeholder</th>
<th>Engagement methods</th>
<th>Benefits to stakeholders and limitations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Students</td>
<td>Trialling of assessment techniques. Surveys and focus groups on benefits of trial. Report back to students about survey results in class and to student representative on the planning program advisory committees.</td>
<td>Clearer articulation of tasks and assessment criteria. Improved learning outcomes according to student feedback. Increased confidence in achieving graduate attributes and being work-ready. The main limitation is that the educator needs to be clear where there is a conflict between student and potential employer feedback about the degree to which students meet graduate attributes. This is difficult to survey.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University planning staff</td>
<td>Survey of all planning schools about experiential learning. Planning educators from five planning schools directly involved in workshops, development and testing of framework, activities, assessment techniques, and case studies. One reference group member was from another planning school.</td>
<td>Support for improving the quality of experiential learning experiences and assessment. Increased understanding and confidence in benchmarks against which education is assessed across universities. Provision of activity and assessment resource materials.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
A couple of educators from other planning schools invited to develop case studies as part of project extension. Presentations, university workshops, and training sessions at ANZAPS conferences and on the USC website. Shared agreement about change to PIA accreditation policy. Material support in preparing for PIA accreditation. Planning educators often believe they are already using experiential learning adequately – some resistance about teaching them ‘how to suck eggs’.

**Professional planners**

- Surveys of those providing experiential input in individual planning school programs (e.g. studios, work placement).
- Periodic input, review and feedback on projects and ongoing development of the resulting products via Planning School Advisory Committees and PIA State Division Education Committees. See Appendix E.
- Presentation at PIA National Conference 2013: message about practitioner support for academic programs by providing practica, design projects, guest lecturers and other input to their local planning program.

Increased confidence that graduates will have the desired attributes that reflect contemporary needs of the profession. Work-ready multi-skilled graduates. Professional planners are familiar with graduates from their local programs.

**PIA**

- PIA (staff) National Education Manager (as designated at the time) on project team. Periodic input, review and feedback on project and ongoing development of the resulting products. Support Project representations to national education committee in first quarter of 2014.
- PIA National Education Manager also coordinates the review of and potential changes to the PIA Accreditation Policy (PIA 2010 as amended)

Ongoing dialogue with PIA staff, PIA National Education Committee, and PIA National Executive about national standards to assess experiential learning opportunities offered by accredited planning schools (Appendix E).

The National PIA manager announced a review of the accreditation policy (9 May 2014). The project team will make a submission based on Chapter 6 recommendations as part of that review process.

The New Zealand Planning Institute has expressed interest in entering further dialogue about standards in its accreditation policy. However, this will be done over a longer period than this project.

**International influence**

- Publication in international planning education journals and peer-reviewed conferences (e.g. ISOCARP 2013; paper to be presented at the 2014 AESOP Conference in Utrecht)

Facilitate further debate about experiential learning framework and techniques across different cultures.
Chapter 8: Reflections on the contribution of this project to experiential learning and OLT outcomes

8.1: Theoretical and practical outcomes of the project

The project has made both a theoretical and practical contribution to the understanding and appreciation of experiential learning in planning education. The project is well-grounded in educational theory including that particularly relevant to planning. The principles developed in the pilot study and based on a preliminary literature search were tested and refined through case studies. The major change as a result of this refinement was to revise the principle ‘theory into practice’ to a ‘theory-practice dialectic’ in recognition of the ability of practice to inform theory, particularly after some reflection (another principle). A further literature review as part of the case studies did not add new principles, but broadened the project team’s explanation and appreciation of them.

The project raised the following questions, which the project team addressed.

Are some principles of greater importance than others and must all the principles be met in order to claim that experiential learning has occurred?

The project team concluded that evidence of application of all the principles will make for a better experiential learning experience and provide useful guidance that can serve to assist teachers, unit coordinators and program heads in thinking through and (re)designing their learning activities, courses, and programs. However, the extent to which the principles are met will vary according to the type and complexity of activity. Some principles, such as ‘purposeful’ and ‘student-centred’, are effective teaching/learning principles in any event. As a result of the project case studies, all of the researchers agreed that certain principles such as ‘reflection’ are considered essential to maximise the benefits of experiential learning, a position supported in the literature (Coulson & Harvey, 2013).

Should the continuum (derived from Jones et al., 2009a; Freestone et al., 2006) represent more university-based experiential learning activities in the early years of a planning program, and more externally-oriented experiential learning activities in later years?

In general, the team agreed that there is a natural progression. As students advance through a program and gain knowledge about planning they can take advantage of and contribute to external experiential learning activities in a more effective manner. However, there is a place for a range of experiential learning in all years. Guest lecturers are effective in both first and final years, provided they are effectively guided and lessons are clearly explained. Placement in a real work environment might be tailored in first year as an observational ‘one day in the life of a planner’ whereas in the final year, the students would be expected to contribute to the workplace over several weeks.

Team members shared their resources, re-designed their courses keeping in mind the principles, evaluated the principles through student and client feedback on the course case
studies, and discussed implications for the framework. As a result, the project team were able to refine an appropriate framework that is grounded in practice – an example of the theory-practice dialectic.

This project confirms findings of an ALTC-funded project by Owen and Stupans (2009) on experiential placements for pharmacy programs. They identified the importance of planning and scaffolding of learning related to competency and other outcomes, including relevant assessment tasks and explicit criteria based on graduated descriptors.

From a practical perspective, courses of project participants were improved as a result of the project. Student learning benefitted from the sharing of project approaches and adaptation of courses to incorporate new activities or additional elements to reflect the principles developed and adopted by the project (see 5.4). All team members benefitted from the group deliberation about the experiential learning activities and assessment tasks before, during and after the case studies, at the four team workshops. A team member who is an ‘early career academic’ indicated that the project, and especially the team workshops, provided an opportunity to begin to develop a language – perhaps a pedagogy – with which to approach teaching. The project outcomes also stimulated further interest in course/learning activity design, and the possibilities for research into teaching and learning.

The student surveys, in particular, affirmed the benefits of experiential learning expressed in the literature and the value of the principles developed during the project. For example, responses confirmed that students gained confidence and cross-cultural learning from an international field trip; became more passionate about a future career direction from guest presenters; better understood the complicated planning hierarchy from finding solutions for a real project; and built communication skills in consulting with community groups.

Relevance to literature

In the initial phase of the project, literature was synthesised to generate a set of EL principles, which were then tested in teaching practice while creating a toolkit of EL case studies.

The study, therefore, has contributed to this existing literature in EL by (a) delivering these principles and (b) showing that they were useful and valuable in practice to design curricula and then test and improve it. These principles proved useful in providing a framework for active and intentional engagement with practice, for curriculum/ program design and for the design of assessment. The principles also reinforce the idea that learning academic knowledge and skills are reinforced by applying experiential learning pedagogy – the concept is not a threat to achieving excellence in planning education.

The collaborative mutual-learning implementation of the project also helped to elaborate and build insights about the principles that were synthesised from the literature:

- Purposeful: EL requires more and possibly different kinds of time, energy and organisation than traditional learning
- Student-centred: EL renders it easy to put the student at the centre of learning
• Guided practice: Ideally, EL takes a longitudinal perspective, changing over the course of a program of study with the role of the educator shifting towards that of a coach in later years. This is consistent with the notion of gauging the student’s transformational development and learning that emerges from a longitudinal approach to assessment/evaluation.

• Theory-practice dialectic: The project uncovered illustrations of how practice can inform theory, not just the other way around (Kolb, 1984)

• Reflection: A central plank of EL is reflection. Some case studies may need to focus on how to best capture the theoretical insights that emerge from an EL activity. The case studies demonstrated different ways of capturing this.

• Evaluation: It highlighted the question of how to make the most of the EL activity, for example, capturing the student’s insights on how the lessons and learnings from a particular experience could be applied in another context. It also highlighted the question of how to capture, and how much weight to afford to, the evaluation of the transformational aspects of EL such as confidence building.

• Exposure to the real world: The project confirmed that immersion in contexts – not just seeing them from afar or from an abstract point of view – is critical in understanding them (Polyanyi, 1967)) and particularly so in planning education.

• Community-university partnerships: The study revealed there could be mutual benefits for the student, community and practitioners. For example, students might be able to provide feedback to community groups that planning practitioners may not feel comfortable giving.

The survey and case studies revealed that planning is a discipline in which the opportunities for EL are rich; this is reflected in the variety of activities that are used to make students ‘work ready’ and make links between theory and practice.

The project also helped ‘unpack’ and ‘put flesh on the bones’ of terms for the various activity types – such as field trips, guest lectures and studio – and elaborated the richness that these activities can entail (Chapter 4: Results: Baseline survey of current experiential learning practice; Chapter 5: Lessons from case studies).

Finally, the project is consistent with the literature in confirming the key benefits of EL: its inspirational nature and capacity to build confidence in tackling complex projects – and key drawbacks – the extra time and resources required.

On reviewing the case studies, the team identified additional aspects to improve. These are identified as ‘considerations for the future’ in section 5.1 and in the toolkit, as well as in section 5.4 ‘Challenges’.

8.2: Applicability or ability to implement outcomes in other institutions and/or locations

In many professions, work placements (practica, WIL, cadetships) have long been advocated as an important part of university education and they have traditionally formed a core ‘practical’ element of the curriculum along with studios/workshops/laboratory activities. This type of learning experience has a long tradition in professions such as medicine, health
sciences, and design (architecture, planning and surveying). In fact, it is virtually inconceivable that people emerging from tertiary education programs and entering these professions fresh from their studies could do so without extensive exposure to ‘real world’ workplaces and the practical application of their studies. While planning courses in Australia have mostly included some form of work experience as a requirement of their undergraduate courses, work experience has not been universally embraced and has actually been resisted by some programs. There are, admittedly, issues of organisation and administration, quality control and industry engagement, which are difficult to manage. The vagaries of the development cycle have meant also that, at times, it is not easy for work placements to be arranged in periods of downturn in the building and development cycle. However, a planning course without some work placement is now the exception and, increasingly, students have come to expect that this is part of their program content.

This project has explored, reviewed and now advocates a wider range of activities than work experience as key elements of EL. In fact the research in the project, the exploration of what is happening in planning programs across Australia, and the findings from the numerous case studies, have all clearly identified that a very wide range of teaching and learning is happening across Australia that has embedded different elements of EL. The research has clearly shown that much of the EL in planning courses often occurs without a conscious attempt to structure it as EL. Herein lies a major weakness. Because EL has traditionally been seen as work experience, much that is otherwise of value as EL experience for students in planning courses occurs ‘naturally’ as part of many courses. Often these forms of EL are not systematically developed, provided or evaluated and they are often provided in an ad hoc and unstructured way. At times, some elements of EL, such as guest lectures, are seen as merely adding variety to a course rather than being treated as a real opportunity for students to gain from the experiences of a practitioner. Field trips and site visits, which are common elements in many programs, are also often undeveloped in their capacity to provide experiential learning as an embedded concept and as a core component of what students learn.

PIA’s performance-based approach allows universities the flexibility to use whatever approaches they feel best suit their particularly context, provided the required competencies are achieved and demonstrated. The project has identified that EL is occurring in many programs across Australia, which suggests that EL should be included in the PIA national accreditation policy. The strength of many planning courses is the degree to which they are incorporating and embedding a wide range of EL activities. The PIA national policy needs to more explicitly embrace and evaluate what has become a substantial shift in program content. For planning courses to be contemporary, reflect growing industry needs, and respond to general calls for university education to embrace work-integrated learning, PIA national accreditation requirements need rewriting to reflect these changes and to embrace them as a necessary component of each university’s program.

To achieve or retain accreditation EL needs to be much better demonstrated as a component of each year of an undergraduate program with a clear explanation of how it is structured so it progressively builds over the four years of the degree. How it is used should be demonstrated so that the principles that this project has identified as
underpinning effective EL are systematically used in the construction and delivery of the EL aspects of the program. Given the utility of the principles in guiding the project case studies and the sharing and application of resources among the partner universities, the principles and resources provided in the toolkit are considered widely applicable to other tertiary planning programs. The online toolkit will have a feedback capability so users can comment on its utility and make suggestions. Planning educators may also offer new case studies building the database which can be applied across planning programs – gradually improving student reflection on their learning and cultivating the art of appreciative enquiry and lifelong learning.

Based on a dissemination exercise at USC, the project team also expect that the concepts, framework and principles are applicable to other discipline areas. During USC’s Learning and Teaching Week in August 2013, the team ran a workshop during which educators from different disciplines from across the University were asked to assess how applicable the principles were to their courses. All responded that they appeared to be quite applicable. One participant commented that it would be a useful guide for curriculum and activity development. This suggestion will be tested in further dissemination activities planned for 2014 (see Chapter 7).

8.3: OLT program priorities

This section reports on how this project addressed two themes from 2011 ALTC priority areas of the Innovation and Development Grants Program, namely: 1) Academic standards; and 2) Assessment and promotion of student learning.

1) The Academic standards priority area focuses on the:

- basis of grading decisions and decisions about student performance and/or the development and description of a shared understanding of ‘standards’ within one or more disciplines or fields of study at either the undergraduate or postgraduate level. These should be collaborative projects, engaging a number of higher education institutions (ALTC, 2011, p. 1).

Among the participant universities, the project team has a better idea of what constitutes high quality EL in the planning discipline. Various dissemination activities have broadened the reach to raise awareness of standards and encourage adoption. The initial baseline survey of all planning schools in Australia and New Zealand stimulated interest in the project. Other dissemination activities that helped develop shared understanding of standards included: PIA and ANZAPS conferences; the project website; three newsletters available via RePlan and the website; engaging practitioners in planning courses; school planning advisory committees; Teaching and Learning Forums, and PIA Education committee activities. In particular, a key milestone of getting agreement on standards was the workshop at the ANZAPS conference in September 2013 where the proposed changes to the PIA accreditation policy were supported by representatives of participating planning schools.

Each university must meet requirements of the Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF) for bachelor and other degrees and diplomas. For example, for a four-year honours degree, graduates should have ‘advanced theoretical and technical knowledge in one or more...
disciplines ...' and 'advanced cognitive, technical and communication skills to select and apply methods and technologies ...' (AQFC, 2013, p. 50). Each university also has requisite academic standards for teaching and learning (e.g. graduate attributes) which not only reflect AQF standards but encapsulate priorities for the individual university. Many of these attributes align with EL.

2) Assessment and promotion of student learning, specifically assessing students in practice settings and innovative models of assessment, examining one or more of the following:

- developmental, diagnostic and summative assessment and feedback to students
- assessing postgraduate coursework students
- assessing students in practice settings
- innovative models of assessment and reporting student achievement
- developments which build on completed ALTC/AUTC projects related to student assessment (Jones et al., 2009a).

The project’s baseline survey of all planning schools identified that formal assessment was most commonly used in association with work-integrated learning or work placement (Chapter 4). It was seldom used with guest presenters. In many cases, EL activities were not directly assessed, but associated tasks were. For example, a field trip might not be directly assessed, but information gathered during a field trip contributed to a design or problem-solving exercise that was formally assessed. It was acknowledged that assessing students in practical settings is a challenge, so the project identified a variety of assessment approaches and techniques (Chapter 5 and the online toolkit). These approaches include options for pass/fail and informal assessment featuring reflection. This is an area for future research.

8.4: Lessons learnt

This section comprises an analysis of the factors that were critical to the success of the approach and of factors that impeded its success.

8.4.1: Factors of success

The generous exchange of resources and ideas between project team members assisted the development of the case studies. Each partner reaffirmed the value of teaching experientially and that their overall programs were headed in the right direction. The project team felt that reflecting on the pedagogical literature and the process was transformational in terms of pedagogical change. For example, the feedback on the Griffith University studio course has influenced change in the planning program through the introduction of a follow-up course.

Each partner already had solid institution-practitioner partnerships that underpinned their experiential learning courses. The additional enhancement of activities for the case studies further developed these in some cases.
In discussions on the toolkit and dissemination methods, the team acknowledged that different people (including planning educators) learn in different ways. So it was agreed that graphics and video clips of EL in action and brief interviews of students’ and clients’ views on the advantages of EL would make the toolkit more user-friendly.

None of this would have been possible without the support of the OLT and the universities of the project team members which provided resources for meetings, research assistance and teaching buyout, which facilitated the testing and extension of the team’s commitment to EL.

8.4.2: Key challenges

EL is time-consuming and demanding of the educators who need to organise activities and interaction with the ‘real world’ experience to ensure that learning outcomes are achieved. This often requires the educator preparing a specific brief for external clients or guest presenters, organising transport for field trips, refining design briefs in conjunction with external clients, and liaising with practitioners to set up work placements and ensure the mutual understanding of outcomes. Frankly, it is easier not to use EL approaches, but the participating researchers agreed that EL is more gratifying for the educator and provides better learning for the student.

The project team timed the baseline survey between semesters to take advantage of teaching-free periods to achieve a good response rate. The lack of capacity due to time/resource constraints or a general unwillingness to participate in the baseline survey of planning schools meant that getting responses took extra time and resources of the project team and yet still did not secure a fully representative survey. So, while the team has a baseline understanding of the status of EL in planning schools, it is not comprehensive of all planning programs in Australia and New Zealand.

One of the problems that emerged in the baseline study and during the team workshops was the need for a common language and common understanding of EL. The baseline study might have been improved with the explanation of terminology. As a result, the team developed a glossary of terms, now included at the beginning of this final report.

The case studies were of courses that were taught during regular semesters. The original plan was to have several semesters in which to improve and test courses. As the project agreement was signed only in September 2011, the team were unable to make use of the second semester of 2011 to test ideas. Since changes to courses are often approved up to one year ahead of time and since not every course is offered every semester, more of the case study trials and surveys took place in the third semester of the project, allowing less time for evaluation and write-up. In addition, sessional staff members do not have control over major course changes and so could only make changes to tutorial learning activities.

The template for writing the case studies was reviewed and revised at one of the workshops. All partners needed to revise their existing case studies according to the new template and write new ones in a timely fashion so that a graphic designer could work on their presentation for the report and toolkit.
It was important to survey students and external participants. The surveys of students after EL activities became tedious for students who were surveyed more than once during the semester. In many cases, it was too hectic to organise practitioner surveys. The team decided well into the second year of the project that videos of student and practitioner perspectives would enhance the toolkit; not as many were included as was hoped.

Part way through the process and at short notice, a new reference group member, Michael Papageorgiou, replaced the previous nominee who had not been able to participate. He attended the second workshop in January 2013, his first face-to-face meeting with the team. He was briefed ahead of time and given access to Basecamp to bring him up to date with activities. As a professional planning practitioner and Chair of the PIA Qld Education Committee for a number of years, he offered insight into the expectations that professional planners have of planning graduates and PIA's accreditation process.

Three members of the team spent time away from their university commitments through the project period: Claudia Baldwin (USC) on study leave from August to November 2012; Eddo Coiacetto (GU) on study leave from January to July 2013; and Tim Perkins (ECU) on long service leave from February to December 2013. However, all three attended all workshops, prepared case studies, and continued to contribute to the project during their absence from their universities.

The time from initial commitment to a project at the proposal stage until its approval, funding and implementation, can be considerable. The first application was submitted in 2010 and, at that time, none of the participants was considering study leave. The size of the team was reduced after the original application in response to feedback from ALTC that it would be difficult to coordinate a large team. In retrospect, a team involving more universities might have enabled the trialling of more case studies, especially given the absence of team members on study leave.

Differences in budgeting and reporting protocols between DEEWR, USC (the project coordinating body) and other universities, meant that time spent on financial reports would have been better spent on the project outcomes. Confusion about budget allocations meant that some funds were underspent.

These challenges had little substantive impact on the outcomes and timeline. The budget was underspent so the project was extended for an additional two and a half months to allow additional case studies to be prepared and dissemination activities to be carried out.
8.5: Areas for future research

A number of areas were identified for future research:

- The effectiveness of different types of assessment applied in EL learning activities could be tested. The costs of incorporating EL within existing workload structures and financial resources should be examined.

- The planning programs and case studies used in this project could be monitored over time to identify changes to experiential learning practice, costs and benefits to the program and students. As most courses are only offered once a year, a longer time period would allow for better monitoring of the changes and the potential benefits or problems.

- Planning graduates could be surveyed once they have been in the workforce for a couple of years to identify the benefits of knowledge gained in planning school, using both EL and non-EL approaches.

- Accreditation and PDP policies across USA, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the UK could be reviewed to recommend some consistency in accreditation criteria for planning schools and practitioners, especially since there is increasing international mobility and joint recognition of planners by some of the national planning associations.

- The applicability of the principles to education programs for other professions and disciplines and the ability for the principles be incorporated into other professional accreditation standards could be investigated.

- Cross-disciplinary courses or activities could be developed and the applicability of EL principles could be tested. The benefits of EL and its effect on multi-disciplinary teams in which planners work with other professions such as engineers or social scientists could be examined.

In particular, future research would be useful given some academic feedback indicates that the experiential learning pedagogy does not adequately reinforce the links between theoretical knowledge, skills and the context of applying knowledge and skills. All assessment activities would need to have a focus on reflection, which varies depending on the level of learning and the nature of the EL activity.
Chapter 9: Evaluation

Evaluation processes were included in the Project Plan and timelines. Data collection for evaluation was informed by a number of resources including Harvey (1998) and Chesterton and Cummings (2007), and specifically included several elements recommended by Owen (2006), including clarification that the objectives and outcomes are logically connected at an early stage. Surveys of students and external planning practitioners involved in experiential learning activities assisted in assessing the effectiveness of tasks and assessment techniques in meeting best practice principles.

Formative evaluations by the Project Team and the Reference Group in Stages 1 and 2 ensured that the project remained on track to deliver outcomes, reflected the needs of all stakeholders, and identified areas for improvement.

In Stage One, formative evaluation was achieved through the attendance, participation and interactive feedback of Professor Robert Freestone, a reference group member, at the two-day workshop held at USC in March 2012. In addition, Ms Tilly Hinton, who co-developed the D-cubed framework for ALTC, attended and provided tips and feedback on the project’s progress. Professor Freestone reinforced the importance of the initial survey to assess the context and supported the team’s efforts to increase the response rate. He complimented the team on their efforts to develop principles, an activity matrix and the pilot of student evaluation of EL experiences, but emphasised the importance of refining the terminology and providing more evidentiary support for the conceptual framework. He commented that the tools would need to be adaptable to the array of university teaching and learning protocols. He encouraged the team to implement timelines agreed at the workshop for developing templates for the case studies and the report outline, and made suggestions for delivering a high-quality report. He also provoked thinking about what happens after the report and the need for project outcomes to be distributed internationally. He interacted throughout the workshop and summarised his thoughts in a dedicated session at the end of the workshop. All of this contributed to improving the team’s performance to ensure it would deliver a high-quality result with not only national but international impact.

Project partners tested the framework in Second Semester 2012. Students involved in the courses at all partner institutions were surveyed for feedback about changes made to experiential learning activities. The project team met in January 2013 to discuss outcomes of the initial changes and student feedback, and changes needed for the 2013 testing of the framework. At the January 2013 meeting the partners and Reference Group provided a formative evaluation of this phase of the research.

At the end of the January 2013 workshop, project partners indicated that the team was well-positioned with considerable work already completed, but most felt they would like to be more advanced in writing up their case studies and agreed that the next few months were critical. Some challenges were discussed: one course that was planned for a trial of new techniques could not be run because of low student enrolment; student surveys for
another course were unable to be conducted in Semester 2, 2012 and had to be scheduled for the first week of Semester 1, 2013 with the same students.

It was agreed that paying attention to the EL principles helped achieve solid learning outcomes. In particular, reflection appears to be a key principle. It was suggested that the difference between learning by doing and experiential learning is reflection. Student reflection provides evidence of how the purpose of each case study was fulfilled, the description of behaviour and transformative change. Conventional assessment methods often do not measure such change. The team agreed this should be captured in the case studies and toolkit.

Both reference group members provided formative feedback at the January 2013 workshop. The new Reference Group member, Michael Papageorgiou, indicated the importance of establishing a common language. He agreed that reflection is a key to EL. He suggested that staff educators have a role in whether guest lectures are considered to constitute EL, guiding the learning, and ensuring the context meets EL principles.

Robert Freestone's advice was:

- The principles/activities matrix need to be further deconstructed.
- A conceptual diagram about the framework might be helpful.
- Indicate the importance of EL to broader planning practice.
- Try and ensure that what is being done is validated against educational best practice and, in particular, that evaluative models ‘stack up’ within the wider paradigm of tertiary education assessment.

He suggested that the team needed to start work imminently on the scope and structure of the final report. He suggested that the team think about writing the report with a wider view of the prospective use of EL outcomes by various stakeholders from other professional fields such as education, nursing, architecture etc., rather than focusing solely on the planning discipline.

Both the Reference Group, consisting of Robert Freestone and Michael Papageorgiou, and an independent reviewer with expertise in planning education, Associate Professor Nicole Gurran from the University of Sydney, undertook a final review of the report in May 2014. The project team assisted this independent evaluation by providing presentations of the work, responding to questions, and facilitating travel and interaction.

The evaluation brief provided to the independent evaluator included quantitative and qualitative measures to assess:

- the refinement and application of the framework and its measurement indicators and instruments
- the impact of Year 1 outcomes on Year 2 outcomes
- improvements in teaching and student learning
- uptake of the framework into learning institutions
- the process of coordination across planning schools and progress by institutional partners (e.g. at workshops, testing instruments, developing case studies)
- the process and outcome of engagement with external stakeholders (e.g. planning practitioners)
- unintended outcomes and lessons learned
- the documented use of the resources package on the USC website after six months.

9.1: Outcomes of evaluation

The reference group members commented on the draft final report in October 2013.

At an initial meeting with Associate Professor Nicole Gurran at the end of September 2013, she commented on the strength of the project due to its theoretical foundation covering the state of the field of knowledge. She suggested that the team should differentiate postgraduate and undergraduate courses pedagogically. In many cases, postgraduate students are practitioners.

She commented on the usefulness of the baseline survey in indicating trends and suggested it might be repeated in five years.

She also commented that there are some outcomes over which the team has no control, such as whether the PIA adopts the accreditation recommendations and changes to program curriculum and course outlines.

She felt that new academics would be especially appreciative of the online toolkit and it should be marketed to them. She also commented on the very real time demands required to implement EL in courses and that these demands would affect the motivation for uptake. Every university also has different requirements for reporting on teaching time which might also affect uptake.

Comments from the formative evaluation were taken into account in the revision of the draft final report.

The independent final evaluation by Associate Professor Gurran is at Appendix G.
Chapter 10: Conclusions

This project involved educators from planning schools at five Australian universities and a representative of the Planning Institute of Australia. The project was undertaken in five phases from September 2011 to mid-2014. The project team surveyed the 28 planning schools in Australia and New Zealand to document the use of EL in tertiary education. The team developed a framework comprising eight principles and a continuum of activities scaffolded across a four-year planning program. The framework was used to guide the enhancement of EL course activities at participating schools. The activities were then analysed in relation to the principles and student feedback, and written as case studies about EL practice in the partner universities’ planning programs. Activities and resource materials were made freely available in an online toolkit of resources that assist planning programs to increasingly trial, adopt and increase EL techniques. These initiatives provided the basis for recommendations to the PIA that EL is a key component of planning programs, and for PD points to be offered to practitioners who support EL in tertiary planning programs. The final stage was to disseminate outcomes to planning schools in universities around Australia.

The project has a sound theoretical foundation and makes a significant contribution to existing pedagogy through the development of the framework which extends the conceptualisation and application of EL beyond the work-based experience in a four-year program. The baseline survey of the status of adoption of EL across Australian and New Zealand planning schools provides a basis for further comparison and improvement over time. Tangible outcomes are improved courses and evidence of student support and interest in EL across the participating universities. The online toolkit is a key practical outcome, providing materials for improving the adoption and practice of EL in planning schools. The vision of EL is being embedded in future practice through ongoing dissemination and training in planning schools across Australia during 2014. An enduring legacy of this project would be the acknowledgment of the significance of EL in the PIA accreditation standards and in general planning practice. Finally, the report authors are convinced that integrating EL into tertiary planning education is fundamental to producing graduates equipped for a complex and changing world.

The support of project team member universities and the OLT in the now Department of Education (Commonwealth) is evidence of the interest in enhancing EL in tertiary planning education in Australia.
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Appendices

Appendix A: Project participants and their expertise

Dr Claudia Baldwin, BA (Sociology), MA (Regional Planning), PhD (Environmental Planning UQ), MPIA – Senior Lecturer, Regional and Urban Planning, University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Dr Baldwin has extensive experience with project and team management in government, consulting and research including: $1.5 M research projects for Great Barrier Reef Marine Park Authority (1986–1990); the National Action Plan for Salinity and Water Quality in Queensland (2000–2002); research and consulting for National Water Commission, Northern Territory and Western Australian governments (2007–2008, 2010). Since beginning teaching at USC in 2006, she has been a strong advocate of using experiential activities in teaching. Her project, Infill Development for Older Australians in South East Queensland, won awards for 'cutting edge research' from PIA Qld and for participatory research from IAP2 in 2012. She researches in social and governance areas of environmental and land use planning. She has published over 100 refereed articles, professional reports, conference papers and presentations. Her commitments allowed her to allocate .2FTE to co-lead the project.

Associate Professor Johanna Rosier, BRTP PhD (Environmental Planning), UQ MPIA, MNZPI. Program Leader, Regional and Urban Planning Program, University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Associate Professor Johanna Rosier has extensive experience in learning in research and teaching, having spent 20 years in New Zealand developing distance learning courses at Massey University. In 2008, she received a citation from the New Zealand Planning Institute for excellence in planning education. In 2010, she completed a USC eLEAP fellowship, developing online curriculum and flexible learning environment for students enrolled in the Master of Regional and Urban Planning. Her research is focused on coastal management and dispute resolution. In 2004, she was appointed by the Minister of Conservation to independently review the effectiveness of the NZ Coastal Policy Statement as required by the Resource Management Act. Current research contributes to a three-year CSIRO initiative to examine institutional arrangements for Australian coastal governance and planning to ensure sustainable, integrated coastal zone management. She has completed a research project to assess the effectiveness of Iconic Queensland Places Act 2008 and, in particular, the roles of the expert assessment panels. She has published over 80 book chapters, refereed articles and other professional reports and papers, several of which specifically focus on planning education. Her commitments allowed her to allocate .2FTE to co-manage the project.

Dr Christine Slade, BA (Com Plan & Devt), PhD (USC), GCProfLearning, ATCL-Academic Developer (ePortfolios), University of the Sunshine Coast, Queensland

Dr Christine Slade is a social planner and tertiary educator with research and teaching interests in places, change and sustainability, food security and governance as well as
innovative pedagogies, assessment, experiential learning and digital literacy. Over the past four years she has taught first year, middle and postgraduate students in both food-related and learning and teaching courses whilst completing her PhD on critiquing the capacity of local government to address complex sustainability problems, using food security as a case study exemplar. Christine is currently leading the university-wide program implementation of ePortfolios, particularly focusing on its use for student learning. Her most recent publications have focused on institutional governance in two streams: firstly, the resilience of food systems and secondly, building capacity in higher education to pedagogical balance the introduction of technological innovations. Christine is project manager of the OLT-funded Experiential Learning in Planning Education research project.

**Associate Professor Eddo Coiacetto**, Bach.Urb Deg Plan (UNE), PhD(UNE), MUDIA, MPIA - Associate Professor, Urban and Environmental Planning, member of the Urban Research Program at Griffith University, Queensland

Associate Professor Coiacetto previously spent several years in professional practice. His teaching interests cover property development and planning; planning practice and law; as well as practicum-based courses in professional practice. He is an advocate of experiential learning approaches and is presently writing a book for CSIRO Publishing on the theme of teaching land development to planning students using a studio based approach. In 2009, he was awarded an ALTC teaching citation for outstanding contribution to student learning. He has a research interest in planning education, having published in this area and participated in a previous ALTC-funded project, Generating Academic Standards in Planning Practice Education. He was involved in the preparation of a PIA award winning project and website dedicated to promoting a better understanding of planning. His additional research focus, the nexus between real estate development and planning, is motivated by an interest in improving the effectiveness of planning practice by basing it on a sounder understanding of the realities of urban development.

**Dr Michael Lockwood**, BSc (Monash), MEnvS (Melbourne), PhD (Queensland) – Senior Lecturer and Head of the Planning Program in the School of Geography and Environmental Studies, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania

Dr Lockwood has over 20 years’ experience as an academic researcher, course coordinator and teacher, three years’ experience as a planner with state government environmental agencies, and seven years’ experience as a project officer with conservation NGOs. His expertise embraces the broad fields of environmental planning and management. He established and coordinates the postgraduate planning courses at the University of Tasmania, and oversees the PIA accreditation of these courses. His research focuses on understanding and improving environmental governance; contributing to our knowledge of the social and institutional dimensions of environmental planning and conservation; and identifying good practice planning and management for protected areas. He is a member of the World Commission on Protected Areas, PIA, and is a Ministerial appointee to the Tasmanian National Parks and Wildlife Advisory Council. He has published four books and over 100 academic papers and reports, including 48 refereed articles. He has been an investigator on 28 research grants and consultancies worth in excess of $8 million.
Dr Andrew Harwood  BSc Hons (UTAS), PhD (UTAS) – Lecturer and Research Fellow Geography & Environmental Studies, School of Land & Food, University of Tasmania, Hobart, Tasmania

Dr Harwood took over Dr Lockwood’s role representing UTAS on the project. He is an early career researcher who teaches planning theory and qualitative research methods to postgraduate students. He has twice been nominated for UTAS teaching excellence awards. In his PhD he examined political constitutions of Tasmania’s island status through the empiric of an arts festival. Currently his research is focused on climate change adaptation in the contexts of bushfire insurance and natural resource management planning. He has previously run a small professional practice specialising in community consultation for local government.

Mr Tim Perkins, MA (Geography), Grad Dip (Urban Design and Regional Planning), MA (Geographical Information Systems), PhD (in process) – Director for Planning, Edith Cowan University, WA

Mr Perkins, another early career researcher, has extensive teaching and research experience in the areas of environmental and rural planning. He has twice been nominated for Carrick Institute Citation Awards (2006 and 2008) and was awarded the Vice-Chancellor’s Award for Excellence in Teaching in 2005. He has developed and taught a range of urban, rural and environmental planning courses in Scotland, at the University of Wollongong and at Edith Cowan University (ECU). He established the Centre for Planning at ECU, a teaching and research centre. He led the team to gain PIA accreditation for the ECU Bachelor of Planning course. He is currently a member of the local organising committee for the World Planning Schools Congress 2011, and the ECU representative on the Australian Dean’s Built Environment and Design Committee.

Assocate Professor Trevor Budge, BA, Diploma of Education, Diploma of Town and Regional Planning, MA (Town Planning) – previously Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences Campus Coordinator La Trobe University Bendigo, Adjunct Professor RMIT University Melbourne, Visiting Professor University of Moratuwa Sri Lanka, National Lifetime Achievement Award PIA, Life Fellow PIA, Chairman National Education Committee PIA 2006 to present.

Associate Professor Budge conducted a consulting business for 18 years prior to entering academia in 2000. He is widely acknowledged for his work in integrating land use planning with natural resource management plans and strategies and for his work in the planning and development of country towns where he has conducted over 400 workshops and community consultation programs. He has a longstanding interest in professional practice, was team member of the ALTC project, Generating Academic Standards in Planning Practice Education (Jones et al 2008), and coordinates international planning practica. Associate Professor Budge currently leads planning at the city of Greater Bendigo.

Cathy Towers - BA (Geography), MPhil (Town Planning) MPIA CPP – previously National Education Manager, Planning Institute of Australia
At the beginning of the project, Cathy Towers was PIA’s National Education Manager with a role in managing the planning program accreditation process and in considering professional development and education issues related to the town planning profession. Cathy was replaced by Mr Ari La Vache.

**Mr Ari La Vache, BA (Training and Development); Diploma Coaching; Practitioner of Neuro-Linguistic Programming (NLP); Practitioner Matrix Therapies; previously Manager of Lifelong Learning, Planning Institute of Australia**

Mr La Vache joined the team as PIA’s representative in April 2012. In his role in the PIA he was responsible for the coordination of the PIA review and accreditation of university planning courses; delivery of a national professional development program and CPP courses; and management of the Certified Practising Planner (CPP) certification program, among other things. Ari has extensive experience in organisational development and design, training delivery and instructional design across a number of industries and sectors including banking, finance, insurance, statutory units and professional services. He currently works as an independent consultant.
### Appendix B: Baseline Survey of Australian and New Zealand Planning Schools

#### B. 1 Australian and New Zealand Planning Schools contacted for baseline survey

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Australian universities contacted</th>
<th>Program level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bond University</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Curtin University</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Deakin University</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Edith Cowan University</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Griffith University</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>James Cook University</td>
<td>Undergraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>La Trobe University</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Macquarie University</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Queensland University of Technology</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Adelaide</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Canberra</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Melbourne</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of New England</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of New South Wales</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Queensland</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of South Australia</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Sydney</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Technology, Sydney</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The University of Western Australia</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of the Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Tasmania</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Western Sydney</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>New Zealand universities contacted</th>
<th>Program level</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Lincoln University</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Massey University</td>
<td>Undergraduate, Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Otago University</td>
<td>Postgraduate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>University of Auckland</td>
<td>Undergraduate, postgraduate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
B.2 Information Sheet for participants

20 April 2012

ALTC Research project “Experiential learning in planning education”

The Project
The University of the Sunshine Coast in partnership with La Trobe, Edith Cowan and Griffith Universities, the University of Tasmania and the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is undertaking a research project on experiential learning in planning education.

This two year project will develop an integrated package of resources to support delivery of good practice experiential learning in Australian tertiary planning education, which will in turn, contribute to improved student learning outcomes. The package will include: sample student experiential learning tasks, assessment tools, case studies, and benchmarking tools.

This initial stage seeks information from teaching staff about existing experiential learning practices in tertiary planning schools across Australia and New Zealand. We are particularly interested in the diversity of approaches, including guest lectures, field trips, design studios, role plays, or work place experience - whether or not they are assessed. While this should give us a benchmark of current practice, we are also looking for exemplary examples. So please send us examples if you like.

The Survey
The attached survey form is structured to provide information about the range of experiential learning practices used by you in your course(s). It takes less than 10 minutes per course to complete. Please return the completed survey to cslade@usc.edu.au by 31 May 2012 (extended from earlier this year).

Consent
Your submission of a completed survey implies your consent to participation in this research project and for the data to be used for the purposes described above. Participation in the research is voluntary. You may withdraw from the process at any time and your permission will be sought to use whatever data has been used to that point.

General survey data will not enable identification of the organisation or individual. We will seek further consent if we wish to use a detailed example provided by you. All data will be destroyed five years after completion of the project.

If you have any comments or complaints about the way in which this research is being conducted please contact one of the co-leaders of the research project listed below, or the Chairperson of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Sunshine Coast (tel (07) 54594574; email humanethics@usc.edu.au). Please refer to ethics approval (A/11/348).

The researchers and partner universities appreciate your assistance. Once the results of the survey have been analysed, a summary of the findings will be provided to respondents, and
presented at the 2012 ANZAPS conference.

Associate Professor Johanna Rosier and Dr Claudia Baldwin
Regional and Urban Planning, University of the Sunshine Coast

Johanna's phone +61 7 54594877; Email Jrosier@usc.edu.au
Claudia's phone +61 7 54301283; Email Cbaldwin@usc.edu.au

Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the University of the Sunshine Coast.
B.3 Survey questionnaire for planning schools

Research project, *Experiential learning in planning education*

This survey is to determine the current extent of experiential learning in planning programs in Australia and New Zealand. Please describe the type of experiential learning activities and the nature of their assessment in your course. Please use the space below the table to expand on your information. Please feel free to attach additional information about the activity that would assist understanding of the activities and assessment. Thank you.

Course/unit/subject name and # ___________________________________________________
University _________________________________________________________________
Name of course/unit coordinator ____________________________________________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Activity/Task</th>
<th>Describe the activity</th>
<th>If assessed, assessment type</th>
<th>Indication of impact on learning (Pass/Fail? Hurdle task? Graded assessment?)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Guest speaker from the profession talking about practice</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Field trip to Council, Court/tribunal or development/heritage/conservation site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Regional or International field studies and project</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Studio-project-based work with a client and/or community</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Simulated development of project at a real site</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Track development application through Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role play (e.g. negotiation, conflict resolution)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>---</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Formal or informal work experience or placement under supervision of a planning professional* and Uni staff (e.g. sandwich year, semester, or number of days or hours)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other experiential activity</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Further information:
Appendix C: Student and Practitioner Feedback Surveys

C.1 Information Sheet for student participants

15 May 2012

ALTC Research project, Experiential learning in planning education

The Project
The University of the Sunshine Coast in partnership with La Trobe, Edith Cowan and Griffith Universities, the University of Tasmania and the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is undertaking a research project on experiential learning in planning education.

This two year project will develop an integrated package of resources to support delivery of good practice experiential learning in Australian tertiary planning education, which will in turn, contribute to improved student learning outcomes. The package will include: sample student experiential learning tasks, assessment tools, case studies, and benchmarking tools.

The Student Survey
This survey seeks your perspective about the contribution of an experiential activity to your learning. It takes about 20 minutes to complete. Please return the completed survey to your lecturer.

Consent
Your submission of a completed survey implies your consent to participate in this research project and for the data to be used for the purposes described above. Survey data will be aggregated and individuals will not be able to be identified. Participation in the research is voluntary. You may withdraw from the process at any time and your permission will be sought to use whatever data has been used to that point.

If you have any comments or complaints about the way in which this research is being conducted please contact one of the co-leaders of the research project listed below, or the Chairperson of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Sunshine Coast (tel (07) 54594574; email humanethics@usc.edu.au). Please refer to ethics approval (A/12/385).

The researchers and partner universities appreciate your assistance. Once the results of the survey have been analysed, a summary of the findings will be provided via a USC web link.

Associate Professor Johanna Rosier and  
Dr Claudia Baldwin  
Regional and Urban Planning,  
University of the Sunshine Coast  
Johanna’s phone +61 7 54594877; Email Jrosier@usc.edu.au  
Claudia’s phone +61 7 54301283; Email Cbaldwin@usc.edu.au

Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the University of the Sunshine Coast.
# C.2 Student Survey for Work Placement

*Note: this survey illustrates how the questions are derived from the criteria for experiential learning. The left column will not be included when the survey is administered.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles/criteria for experiential learning</th>
<th>Questions for student</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Purposeful**                              | What did you understand was the purpose of the planning practicum?  
Were your expectations fulfilled?  
What were your major achievements during the practicum? |
| **Student-centred**                         | Taking into account your previous understanding of planning, what did you learn that was new about  
• planning context (eg legislation, DA, design, community consultation etc)  
• planning practitioners and associates  
• workplaces  
Was there anything that you expected to learn but did not? |
| **Application of theory and concepts**      | Were you able to apply any concepts learned in your studies (eg in class)?  
Did you observe the application of any concepts learned in your studies?  
Did this experience with ‘real world practice’ conflict with any of your previous understanding or concepts about planning? |
| **Real world context**                      | How did this differ from the classroom experience? Could this have been experienced in another way? eg on-line, research?  
Has it influenced their future work direction, study or career path? |
| **Guided practice**                         | Did the course coordinator provide sufficient information and guidance  
• to help you with learning about planning content during the placement?  
• to help you through any difficult situations? Give an example.  
• to clarify your expectations in terms of assessment?  
Have you any suggestions for the improvement of the work placement course? |
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Did the journal (or other assessment item) help you reflect on your role and learning from the experience? In what way?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Should an external supervisor participate in the assessment of the practicum outputs? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-university partnerships</td>
<td>Have there been any ‘flow-on’ effects from the work placement eg future employment, new networks/contacts?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
C.3 Student Survey for Field Trip

The objective of this survey is to assist our understanding of the role of ‘experiential learning’ in planning education, then to use that to improve your educational experience.

Please think carefully before answering the questions below, and do not identify yourself so the results remain anonymous.

Which, if any of these sites have you visited previously?

If you have visited them, did the field trip commentary change your impressions, and if so, how?

Please give an example of one or two concepts about planning theory or professional practice that you have seen demonstrated today.

Identify two or three design concepts that you saw illustrated today.

What ideas did you gather today that you might consider applying in your design project?

In what way has today’s experience influenced your future study, work or career path?

Did anything you see today make you think twice about (ie evaluate) what you have learned in class?

Could you have gained this experience in some other way e.g. on-line, guest lecturers, DVDs? Yes or No

For either answer, please explain why.
Was the field trip well-organised (clear objectives, destinations, on-schedule).

Suggestions for improvement

On a scale from 1 to 5, with 1 ineffective and 5 very effective, how effective were the ‘tour guides’?
- in pointing out key design features?
- in explaining the design and the development process?
- in answering your questions?

Any other comments?

Did the notes you made on the field Trip Review Sheet help you reflect and critically evaluate on what you learned from the trip? If so how?

Should your participation in a field trip (such as asking questions, contributing to discussion) be part of the assessment for this course? Yes or no

Should your record sheet from the field trip
- be handed in at the end of trip and be graded as part of the assessment for this course? Yes or no
- be typed up and handed in a week later as part of the assessment for this course? Yes or no

Why? Any benefits? Eg would it help your reflection on the value of the field trip?

Thank you
C.4 Student Survey for Studio design for a client

The objective of this survey is to assist our understanding of the role of ‘experiential learning’ in planning education, then to use that to improve your educational experience.

Please read the questions first, then think carefully before answering them. Do not identify yourself so the results remain anonymous.

What concepts learned in the course materials (lectures and reference materials) did you apply in designing your project?

What concepts or ideas observed or experienced during the field trip did you apply in designing your project?

How did the land use suitability analysis help with the design?

What were your major achievements/learnings from the course that you hope to apply in future?

How has working on this project influenced your future work or study direction?

On a scale from 1 to 5 (where 1 is low; 5 is high), to what degree did the lectures by Claudia and Malcolm provide sufficient information and guidance about:

  a) design, livability and sustainability features? _________
  b) the design and development process? _________
  c) what was expected in the assessments? _________

Did the experience of doing a design project meet your expectations?
Was there anything that you expected to learn but did not?

Did the individual assessment form assist you to reflect on your role in your project team or in doing the project? If so, how?
Should the external client be part of the assessment panel? Why?

Any other comments?

Thank you.
C.5 Information Sheet for Planning Practitioner

15 July 2012

Research project “Experiential learning in planning education”

The Project
The University of the Sunshine Coast in partnership with La Trobe, Edith Cowan and Griffith Universities, the University of Tasmania and the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA) is undertaking a research project on experiential learning in planning education.

This two-year project will develop an integrated package of resources to support delivery of good practice experiential learning in Australian tertiary planning education, which will in turn, contribute to improved student learning outcomes. The package will include: sample student experiential learning tasks, assessment tools, case studies, and benchmarking tools.

Survey of Planning Practitioner
This survey seeks your perspectives about the contribution of the experiential activity in which you were involved to student learning. It takes about 20-30 minutes to complete. Please return the completed survey to the lecturer leading the course.

Consent
Your submission of a completed survey implies your consent to participate in this research project and for the data to be used for the purposes described above. Survey data will be aggregated and individuals will not be able to be identified. Participation in the research is voluntary. You may withdraw from the process at any time without penalty or need to explain and your permission will be sought to use whatever data has been used to that point.

If you have any comments or complaints about the way in which this research is being conducted please contact one of the co-leaders of the research project listed below, or the Chairperson of the Human Research Ethics Committee at the University of the Sunshine Coast (tel (07) 54594574; email humanethics@usc.edu.au). Please refer to ethics approval (A/12/385).

The researchers and partner universities appreciate your assistance. Once the results of the survey have been analysed, a summary of the findings will be provided via a USC web link.

Associate Professor Johanna Rosier and Johanna’s phone +61 7 54594877; Email Jrosier@usc.edu.au
Dr Claudia Baldwin Email Cbaldwin@usc.edu.au
Regional and Urban Planning, Claudia's phone +61 7 54301283;
University of the Sunshine Coast Email Cbaldwin@usc.edu.au

Support for this project has been provided by the Australian Learning and Teaching Council Ltd, an initiative of the Australian Government Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations and the University of the Sunshine Coast.
**C.6 Survey of Planning Practitioner**

The objective of this survey is to assist our understanding of the role of ‘experiential learning’ in planning education, then to use that to improve students' educational experience.

*Note: this survey illustrates how the questions are derived from the criteria for experiential learning. The left column will not be included when the survey is delivered.*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principles/criteria for experiential learning</th>
<th>Questions for planning practitioner</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Purposeful</td>
<td>What did you understand was the purpose of the experiential learning (EL) activity (e.g. planning practicum, design studio)?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What was your understanding of the students' and professional’s roles? Were your expectations fulfilled?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>What is your impression of the main achievements by the students during the EL activity?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Student-centred</td>
<td>Did you understand what the student needed to learn during this activity? Explain how and what. e.g. about:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• planning context (eg legislation, DA, design, community consultation etc)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• planning practitioners and associates</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• workplaces</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Was there anything that you expected the student(s) to learn but did not?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Application of theory and concepts</td>
<td>Did the student(s) contribute or apply concepts from planning theory to their 'real world' activity? Explain how.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Real world context</td>
<td>Could you please describe what real world experience was provided? Could this have been experienced in another way? eg on-line, research?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Do you think this EL experience has influenced the student(s)' future work direction, study or career path?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Guided practice</td>
<td>Were you able to guide or direct the student’s learning to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• fill a perceived gap in their knowledge?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>


- help them through any difficult situations?

  Give an example.

  Have you any suggestions for the improvement of this course?

  If a work placement, was the student provided with a planning mentor? What guidance did he/she provide?

  Would closer links to the course coordinator or uni during the activity (e.g. practicum) help?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reflection</th>
<th>Did any assessment items (e.g. journal, group work) help the student reflect on his/her experience? In what way?</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evaluation</td>
<td>Should an external planning practitioner participate in the assessment of the student outputs? Why?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community-university partnerships</td>
<td>Have there been any ‘flow-on’ effects from the work placement eg future employment, new networks/contacts?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Has your experience with this activity/course strengthened or diminished your relationship with the university?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
## Appendix D: Introduction to Toolkit development

**Which experiential learning activities are most appropriate for me to use in my course?**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Considerations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is this course in the early or final years of the program? – Are students still learning basic knowledge and skills?</td>
<td>Short activities such as studio, role play exercises and guest lectures may be more appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What are the learning outcomes and topic areas for this course?</td>
<td>Basic prerequisite planning knowledge and skills will continue to be applied in subsequent courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>This activity builds on basic knowledge by developing a student’s functional planning.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Are prerequisite knowledge and skills from previous courses earlier in the program relevant?</td>
<td>Consider the importance of building on previous knowledge and skills learned by students – in all courses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which assessment criteria are best to assess whether students meet learning?</td>
<td>Assessment relates back to and builds on existing formal and informal knowledge and skills. The experiential learning activities and assessment need to link back to topic/module or learning outcomes.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Think about whether a group or individual assessment is more appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-assessment or peer assessment may be appropriate to support reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Which assessment criteria/activities are best to assess whether students meet learning outcomes?</td>
<td>Assessment relates back to and builds on existing formal and informal knowledge and skills. How do experiential learning activities and assessment link back to topic/module learning outcomes?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Consider whether individual or group assessment is more appropriate.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Self-assessment or peer assessment may be more appropriate to support reflection.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Evaluate whether assessment should be graded at all – or if it is best to give informal formative feedback at some point.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What type of input do I need from planning practitioners or others in the community (guest lecture, input as a client, professional host for shadowing activity?),</td>
<td>Practitioner input depends on the extent of ‘real world’ influence on both content of activities and the process of completing the activity – community input may be required more than once.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Resources needed will depend on the nature and duration of the activity. This may relate to buses.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Question</td>
<td>Answer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td>----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiential learning activities?</td>
<td>and external liaison for field trips, extra tutorial support in studio depending on student numbers, more time allocated to you for curriculum design and preparation of course materials. If an international field trip is proposed, it may also be important for students to be made aware of culture and customs of the host country.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What is the best sequence for delivering the topics and experiential learning activities?</td>
<td>Decide whether topics are better planned week by week, or longer modules, such as one activity being run over several weeks, may be more appropriate. Complex skills and knowledge may be best delivered using a sequence of activities over a longer time frame.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is it appropriate for some activities to be group activities?</td>
<td>This will depend on learning outcomes, the size of the class and the number of students from other programs.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>If I would like to run a community planning project what should I consider?</td>
<td>Ensure that students have the basic knowledge and skills (from prerequisite courses) needed to complete the project (field surveys, data collection, interview skills, mapping, and professional report writing). Be specific about the level of knowledge and skills application expected in student assessment types. Also decide what type of presentation to community should be required – separate presentation to each client group or one presentation to all?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>What level of reflection is required in this course, given the students’ progression in the planning program and the complexity of the EL activity planned?</td>
<td>Reflection may be scaffolded within a course, and/or across a program. In courses early in the program, reflection may be basic and may be carried out as peer assessment in small groups.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How will you evaluate success of the experiential learning activities – e.g. that they were purposeful??</td>
<td>Select Questions which advise whether the goals for the activity are clear. Questions may also be asked to assess the contribution of a specific course to achieving planning program outcomes (e.g. The program’s Graduate Attributes). You may include specific questions in the</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| What other matters should I consider in designing evaluation of EL success? | You also determine if students experience problems which relate back to the context for student learning, and clarity of course learning outcomes.  
Allow sufficient time in which to carry out experiential learning activities.  
Resource issues may be difficult to deal with within the life of a course and may need to be dealt with in the future.  
Other issues may arise if students have not played an active role in deciding how and what to do to achieve their goals (student-centred learning) in carrying out the activity. This issue is more relevant in advanced courses. |
|---|---|
| Advise students of relevant happenings in the real world of planning which may be relevant to the formal learning being done in this course | Court/tribunal hearings in the local region, public meetings about planning/community issues, environmental and social volunteering opportunities (short- and long-term) – to improve their informal knowledge and skills and gain an understanding of issues in communities.  
This information may be made available through electronic noticeboard for all program students. |
### Appendix E: Dissemination activities

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Date</th>
<th>Event title, Location (City only)</th>
<th>Brief description of the purpose of the event</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Number of higher education institutions represented</th>
<th>Number of other institutions represented</th>
<th>Participant feedback about the project, issues raised in the project and/or future research areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.09.11</td>
<td>Sunshine Coast University</td>
<td>Media release about the project</td>
<td>Public</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.09.11</td>
<td>USC FAB Planning Advisory Committee, Sunshine Coast</td>
<td>Introductory info about project</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Feedback about the strength of the project – important initiative in planning education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.10.11</td>
<td>REPLAN, Australia-wide</td>
<td>Introductory media/info about project to all Aust’n and NZ planning schools</td>
<td>200+</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.11.11</td>
<td>PIA Qld Education Committee</td>
<td>Informed of project and that input will be required</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>General Support for the project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.11.11</td>
<td>PIA National E-News</td>
<td>Informed of project</td>
<td>1200</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>unknown</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.11.11</td>
<td>Professional Advisory Board, Griffith Uni, Brisbane</td>
<td>Introductory info about project and that input will be required</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>Interesting project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.11.11</td>
<td>SEQ Planning Schools Educators meeting</td>
<td>Introductory info about project; increased input into survey</td>
<td>22</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Date</td>
<td>Event title, Location (City only)</td>
<td>Brief description of the purpose of the event</td>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>Number of higher education institutions represented</td>
<td>Number of other institutions represented</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.04.12</td>
<td>RePlan notice about project and survey</td>
<td>Proposed phases of the project request for completion of teaching survey</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Survey completed 30 July 2012</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.08.12</td>
<td>Project website launched</td>
<td>&lt;www.usc.edu.au/explearning&gt;</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21.08.12</td>
<td>USC L&amp;T Week</td>
<td>Presentation Experiential Learning in Planning education</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>Principles able to be used across disciplines with little adjustment.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>21–23.09.12</td>
<td>ANZAPS Meeting, Bendigo</td>
<td>Meeting of Australian and New Zealand planning school educators.</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>12 universities</td>
<td>PIA education committee representative.</td>
<td>Requests for copies of the final survey report. Discussion about the EL Principles</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.11.12</td>
<td>Griffith Uni Planning School Professional Advisory Board</td>
<td></td>
<td>20</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.11.12</td>
<td>ECU Course Consultative Committee</td>
<td>Overview of the project, info about survey of planning schools and case studies</td>
<td>6 participants but minutes sent to all Committee members.</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.12</td>
<td>La Trobe Uni Planning Advisory Committee, Bendigo</td>
<td>Introductory info about project and that input will be required</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.12.12</td>
<td>PIA members, Hobart</td>
<td>Informed of project</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Experiential learning in planning education: Resources and tools for good practice
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Event Date</th>
<th>Event title, Location (City only)</th>
<th>Brief description of the purpose of the event</th>
<th>Number of participants</th>
<th>Number of higher education institutions represented</th>
<th>Number of other institutions represented</th>
<th>Participant feedback about the project, issues raised in the project and/or future research areas</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>22.02.13</td>
<td>La Trobe</td>
<td>EL case studies included</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.02.13</td>
<td>Second Project newsletter</td>
<td>Replan and website</td>
<td>All planning educators in Australia and NZ</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24-27.03.13</td>
<td>Paper presented at PIA Canberra Conference</td>
<td>Presentation Growing Future Planners in concurrent session entitled</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>Interest in the increased involvement of practitioners in education</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.04.13</td>
<td>USC FAB Advisory Committee – Planning</td>
<td>Regular meeting of USC academics with local planning practitioners. PIA paper as update.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>Feedback positive</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.07.13</td>
<td>USC FAB Advisory Committee – Planning</td>
<td>Update to regular meeting of USC academics with local planning practitioners</td>
<td>14?</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>8?</td>
<td>Regular briefing - N.A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26.08.13</td>
<td>USC Learning and Teaching Week</td>
<td>Presentation and workshop ELIP: Resources and tools for good EL Practice.</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Workshop indicated that a number of academics across programs are interested in using the ELIP toolkit once available.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27-28.09.13</td>
<td>ANZAPS, Canberra</td>
<td>Workshop re Outcomes of Experiential Learning in Planning project</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Workshop discussion focused on implementation of experiential learning and how toolkit/resources would support particular new academics in developing new planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Date</td>
<td>Event title, Location (City only)</td>
<td>Brief description of the purpose of the event</td>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>Number of higher education institutions represented</td>
<td>Number of other institutions represented</td>
<td>Participant feedback about the project, issues raised in the project and/or future research areas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>15.10.13</td>
<td>USC L&amp;T seminar</td>
<td>Workshop re ELIP outcomes</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>n.a.</td>
<td>Principles applied by educators in disciplines other than planning, and positively received.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.12-03.13</td>
<td>La Trobe Uni news and Quarterly</td>
<td>Dissemination of Student exercise with City of Greater Bendigo</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11.13</td>
<td>GU</td>
<td>Planning School Professional Advisory Board</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.11.13</td>
<td>ECU Learning and Teaching Week</td>
<td>Poster about project</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>USC only</td>
<td>USC</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>2014</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14.03.14</td>
<td>USC Sessional Staff PD Day</td>
<td>2x 1.5 hr EL Workshops Summary session to 150 sessional staff at the end of the day given by one of the workshop participants.</td>
<td>70/150</td>
<td>USC only</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Positive feedback about the experiential way of delivery, immediate usefulness of EL in the classroom, and the opportunity to learn more through the online toolkit. All participants came from other professional backgrounds besides planning but found EL applicable to their own fields. Future research could examine application of the EL principles to other disciplines.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17.03.14</td>
<td>Global Planning Network concurrent</td>
<td>Paper presented with recommendations for changing planning education and professional</td>
<td>35</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Date</td>
<td>Event title, Location (City only)</td>
<td>Brief description of the purpose of the event</td>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>Number of higher education institutions represented</td>
<td>Number of other institutions represented</td>
<td>Participant feedback about the project, issues raised in the project and/or future research areas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>30.03.14</td>
<td>Planning Pathways Presentation PIA Victoria Meeting</td>
<td>To inform PIA members and affiliated institutions about the project.</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>Included PIA, Department of Transport, Planning and Local Infrastructure, 4 universities with credited planning programs and the Geography Teachers Association of Victoria. Strong interest in the findings, links to initiatives that the Planning Pathways group is discussing – getting more practical involvement in planning including from secondary students with projects and work experience</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.04.14</td>
<td>PIA National Education Committee - 'Plan' Teleconference</td>
<td></td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>Agreed that the proposal was worthwhile to pursue.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13.05.14</td>
<td>ELIP Workshop, Hobart Inform UTAS planning staff about the outcomes of the ELIP project</td>
<td></td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>Very supportive of EL and keen to be involved in more discussions about possibility of using EL as the pedagogical framework for the design of a new undergraduate planning degree.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>23.05.14</td>
<td>Replan email to all planning educators ELIP project completed, Toolkit online – Please add case studies with reflective evaluation</td>
<td></td>
<td>All Australian and NZ planning educators and others</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>No feedback</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25.05.15</td>
<td>Email to Planning Staff, GU Informed Griffith Uni Planning Staff and Urban Research Program at Nathan</td>
<td></td>
<td>16</td>
<td>3 units in one university</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>None by email. Two recipients discussed at SEQ Planning</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Date</td>
<td>Event title, Location (City only)</td>
<td>Brief description of the purpose of the event</td>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>Number of higher education institutions represented</td>
<td>Number of other institutions represented</td>
<td>Participant feedback about the project, issues raised in the project and/or future research areas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.05.14</td>
<td>Workshop about the ELIP project, Uni of Southern Queensland Planning program staff, Toowoomba</td>
<td>ELIP Project, scaffolding experiential learning across the proposed four-year program at USQ.</td>
<td>2 – planning educators</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Interested in the application of EL and will take the information to their EL working group in engineering.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>12.06.14</td>
<td>Workshop at UNISA, Adelaide</td>
<td>Presentation of EL outcomes to UNISA staff</td>
<td>9 – from a variety of disciplines</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>Participants contributed their experience with EL in international field trips, law clinics, etc. Indicated principles were useful. Suggested separating reflection into two parts: private/personal and shared. Different methods of learning suit different people; EL can allow for that.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>24.06.14</td>
<td>South East Queensland (SEQ) Planning Educators’ meeting, Brisbane</td>
<td>Annual SEQ planning academics get together to discuss planning education issues, innovations and challenges</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>5 – USC; UQ; QUT; GU; USQ; Bond</td>
<td>N.A.</td>
<td>20-minute presentation well received and generated discussion about studios in particular. Would problem-solving be experiential learning and a suitable case study? Can one have too many studios in a degree? Can one have too much group work in a degree? Asked for contributions to the case studies and website.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.07.14</td>
<td>Association of European Planning Schools</td>
<td>Paper &quot;The Influence of Experiential Learning in Preparing Future Planners to be</td>
<td>17</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>Session was dominated by reports of various experiential learning initiatives. Sushou University and Stockholm Universities may provide potential case-studies for experiential</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Event Date</td>
<td>Event title, Location (City only)</td>
<td>Brief description of the purpose of the event</td>
<td>Number of participants</td>
<td>Number of higher education institutions represented</td>
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<td>Participant feedback about the project, issues raised in the project and/or future research areas</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Congress, Utrecht, Netherlands</td>
<td>Flexible, Responsive and Innovative presented to meeting of planning academics from the UK and European planning schools.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>learning toolkit.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix F: Case Studies

GUEST SPEAKER

Case Study 1: Sustainable Environmental Management

By Andrew Harwood – Semester 2, 2012 – University of Tasmania

Student cohort: Postgraduate – Graduate Diploma /Master of Environmental Planning; Graduate Diploma /Master of Environmental Management (14 on-campus students and 15 distance students)

Context/purpose

KGAS14 is a core unit for postgraduate students completing a degree in Environmental Management, and an elective for students completing a degree in Environmental Planning. The unit introduces students to key concepts, principles and practices of Sustainable Environmental Management. Subject matter is organised around the concepts of sustainability and socio-ecological resilience, and learning activities detail how working with natural systems and processes at various scales constitutes effective environmental management.

Unlike other case studies where a change was made to a unit, this case study documents and reviews the existing use of an experiential learning (EL) activity: guest speakers. Current practice was evaluated using key principles of EL (noted below). Information was obtained from student surveys and interviews with guest speakers and the unit coordinator/lecturer. This case study provides insights into the utilisation of guest speakers as an EL activity.

Experiential Learning Principles

Purposeful

For example, were guest speakers and students aware of the aims of the learning activity, and were guest presentations linked to the units learning outcomes?

Student-centred

Did guest speakers help students to direct their own learning?

Practice-theory dialectic

To what extent did guest speakers provide students with practical examples of theoretical concepts and ideas?

Real world

Did guest speakers give students an idea of what it would be like to work in the field of sustainable environmental management? Did guest speakers relate classroom learning to real world situations? Would guest presentations be better delivered outside classroom settings?

Guided practice

Did the unit coordinator/lecturer provide clear instructions to the guest speakers and to students?

Reflection

Were there adequate opportunities for students to engage in discussion with guest speakers?

Evaluation

For example, how were guest presentations linked to assessment tasks?

Community-university partnership

Are guest presentations mutually-beneficial for both the university and guest speakers? How might universities better support guest speakers?

Activities

Guest speakers are used extensively in the unit to support on-campus learning. Distance students are asked to listen to electronic recordings of guest presentations. Seven different hour-long guest presentations contribute to various workshop themes, especially subject-specific and real life case studies of environmental issues. Another guest speaker acts as a facilitator in a final class 2-hour synthesis workshop where students are encouraged to apply and reflect on their learning. In all, guest speakers are used in eight out of thirteen weeks of teaching. In addition to this, the unit coordinator/lecturer (UC/L) uses numerous short (5-minute) videos of international experts as prompts to class discussion.

The UC/L sourced guest speakers predominately from personal contacts, both inside and outside the university. Guest presentations were delivered by a mix of people in a range of capacities, comprising:

- a retired academic
- a retired state government forestry worker
- an employee of a regional NRM organisation;
- a current doctoral candidate
- an employee of a major industrial business
- the owner of a small agri-business;
- an employee of an Indigenous land management NGO
- a volunteer with an environmental NGO.

Guest speakers were generally used in the last hour of a four-hour class, coming at the end of a range of structured learning activities. The UC/L noted that guest speakers are used for three main reasons:

1. to provide students with a diversity of perspectives
2. to provide expertise in a field that the UC/L does not have
3. to increase the diversity of learning experiences and activities.

Assessment

Guest speakers are linked to two of the units four assessment tasks, though in different ways:

1. Directly: Participation in Group Learning (10%) – as an opportunity for students to demonstrate participation and contribution to group learning by engaging in class discussions and question and answer sessions with guest speakers; and
2. Indirectly: 4000 word Essay (45%) – through the use of material provided by guest speakers in a written assignment.

Other assessment items used in the unit include a student conference team presentation (25%) and participation and presentation in a charrette exercise (20%).
Student Feedback
The key results of the feedback from the lecturer/unit coordinator, students and guest speakers are summarised below:

- **The use of guest speakers may be envisaged as a form of ‘reflective observation’ in Kolb’s EL cycle**
  - For the UC/L guest presentations are used after students have been “provided with theory and content. They are giving practical exemplification of what I have already told the students... We talk about all these things that the guest speaker is going to cover, but what they [guest speakers] are doing is that they are using their own language, their own work and personal experiences, and putting a different light on the same thing”. Mapping Kolb’s EL cycle onto the UC/L’s pedagogy suggests that guest presentations provide opportunities for students to experience vicariously and engage in reflective observation, “where the learner is consciously reflecting back on that experience” (Healey & Jenkins 2000: 187).

- **Students greatly appreciate and value guest speakers as a learning activity**
  - Students valued guest speakers for reasons that are strongly linked to key principles of EL. Guest speakers were appreciated for their ability to link university learning to real world problems and issues, provide real life examples of theoretical concepts and ideas, and practical insights about key subject themes. However, the dominant reason given for liking guest speakers was that they provided students with diverse perspectives, and, in a related theme, offered points-of-view that were different to that of the UC/L. Guest speakers were also valued as a learning activity that broke-up routine class learning, with students emphasising the importance of interactive elements of guest presentations, such as question & answer and discussion sessions.

- **Guest speakers support key principles of EL, including offering practitioners opportunities for professional development and learning**
  - Guest speakers recognised their value as a learning experience for students in terms of their ability to provide real world context and practical examples of theoretical concepts – two key principles of EL. Guest speakers also greatly valued the opportunity that delivering a presentation within a university setting provided for their own professional development and learning; an example of a mutually-beneficial university-community partnership.

- **Guest speakers have to be engaging and presentations well-integrated with other learning activities**
  - Feedback from students, guest speakers and the UC/L consistently highlighted two key aspects of successful guest presentations:
    - (1) that they be engaging, interactive and offer multiple opportunities for discussion and reflection; and
    - (2) that they be well-integrated with the unit/course and coordinated with other learning activities.

- **Guidance from the UC/L is critical to guest presentations achieving their potential as EL activities**
  - There is a need to clearly explain the purpose of guest presentations to students, including how they are linked to other learning activities and assessment tasks. UC/Ls also need to work closely with guest speakers to provide them with succinct and relevant information that they can use when designing presentations. Surveyed guest speakers were prepared to tailor their presentations if they had guidance about the unit/intended learning outcomes, key themes, concepts, and theories. Also, UC/Ls should ensure that there is ample opportunity for discussion and interaction between guest speakers and students as this is central to the activity as a mutually-beneficial learning experience.

**References**

**Ideas for further enhancing the experience**
- Select guest speakers on the basis of their ability to provide a dynamic presentation and different perspective.
- Provide greater guidance to guest speakers, such as succinct and relevant information about the unit, discussions about how their presentation fits with other learning activities, and ask them to ‘lecture’ less and engage more in class discussion/interaction.
- Introduce a small reflective assessment task. For example, students could keep a record of how guest speakers had linked theory to practice, or provided practical examples of key concepts/themes.
- Organise some guest presentations to occur in non-university settings, such as workplaces or in combination with a field trip.
Case Study 2: Advanced Planning Practice

By Claudia Baldwin – Semester 1, 2013 – University of the Sunshine Coast

Student cohort: Final Year Undergraduates (14) in 2013

Context/purpose

This final year Advanced Planning Practice course consolidates and extends knowledge of theory, law, ethics and policy through addressing complex multi-level planning issues such as affordable housing, climate change and the coast, alternative use of retired cane lands, major project impact assessment, planning for disaster resilience, and plan compliance.

Activities

The course includes trialling the use of planning practitioners as guest lecturers to discuss a particular topic and case study directly related to the course, in which they have experience. About half of the classes included an invited practitioner who spoke for 30 minutes followed by 20-minute question period (7 in all). The practitioner was briefed ahead of time about what the students were learning about the topic, and the relevance of the case study was also discussed so the material would be well aligned. Each practitioner was also asked to briefly describe their trajectory as a planning professional, i.e. how they came to be in the position they are in today. The trial was run in the first half of 2013 and this was the first time that so many practitioners were invited to provide input into the course.

Experiential Learning Principles

Purposeful Students are to draw on practitioners’ experiences with complex planning issues to make the link between theory and practice.

Practice-theory dialectic Practitioners were chosen to complement the more theoretical discussions, by providing an explanation of practical application on the topic.

Student-centred Students were asked to identify key methods and skills to add to their ‘toolkit’, such as housing trend analysis, and to reflect about their own future career.

Real world Practitioners provided real examples and case studies to illustrate the complexity of planning in their area e.g. politics and community views; data limitations that restrict evidence of the need for change.

Guided practice The course coordinator guides consideration of the practitioner’s input by framing it in the context of the lesson and assignments.

Reflection The opportunity to question and interact with the guest made it apparent that students were reflecting on the material. The survey for this project also stimulated students to reflect on what they are learning.

Evaluation The two main assessment tasks were to a) describe how a planning policy strategy could be implemented in a planning scheme; and b) write a Ministerial brief on an impact assessment. Practitioners were invited who could provide insight and advice into these assessments.

Community-university partnership Most of the practitioners were already known to the course coordinator and genuinely want to contribute to student learning. The relationship is fostered by ensuring that students attend, interact respectfully with the practitioner, and are prepared to ask relevant or provoking questions. The students are told they have the opportunity to practise making an impression on potential employers.

Assessment

A formative assessment task was run after a guest lecture to encourage students to reflect on what they had just learned: ‘Write a two-minute essay on what you learned from this guest lecture. Hand it in; it will not be marked.’ Then it was fed back to the students during the course review at the end of semester.

The two major assessment tasks required students to imagine they are a professional planner and:

a) write a report examining the local council’s strategic policies, to determine the extent to which they are reflected in the planning scheme and what changes they might make to a code to improve alignment; and

b) write a Ministerial brief making recommendations to the Minister about whether he/she should accept or reject an impact assessment study for a major infrastructure development. The brief should include evidence for the recommendation and any approval conditions.

Guest lecturers spoke on the two topics.
**Student Feedback**

- Students were exposed to new areas of complexity and gained greater in-depth understanding of previously addressed planning topics.
- How planners manage and work with politically and socially contentious matters ... impossible to 'divorce’ one another and something necessary to accept in planning.
- Disconnect between policy and outcomes on the ground...need consistency between different levels of policy.
- Importance of community knowledge when formulating plans/policy (locals know what happens in their communities and they have to live with what plans are implemented).
- Value of government policies in reflecting values, concerns of communities.
- The lengthy process that is required to get a strategy through council and accepted by the general community.
- The amount of work council had to put in with the planning scheme...how complex (and vast).
- How data was gathered, which data to include; data analysis.
- Importance of communication and ethics in workplace.
- Stick to what you believe in, stay focused on why you’re a planner, whilst maintaining workplace objectives.
- Reservation about working within government due to process and frameworks.
- Different views about strategic planning: Avoid strategic planning. Strengthened my desire to someday work in a strategic planning department. Moving focus away from DA boring stuff and into what really matters.
- Different views about whether to work in community consultation: Turned me off engaging with the community: time-consuming and expensive process that doesn’t achieve a lot; we need to be innovating in the way we go about consultation; deal with it professionally.
- It made me think about going into the compliance area of planning. I didn’t know it existed.

**Student Reflection**

- Student reflected on applicability to their future career and clarified where they want to work.
Ideas for further enhancing the experience

- To ensure theory-practice dialectic, I would make sure the connection between the lecturer material and student learning is clear at the beginning of the class and follow up at the end of the class with discussion about implications from the guest talk.
- All but one guest was considered engaging. Each year I will review who to invite as a practitioner, taking into account feedback about the lecturers’ ability to engage the students. For practitioners who are not experienced presenters, I will give more advice about how to structure their talk and make it engaging, e.g., with visuals or by posing questions.
- I will include two assessment items which will encourage student reflection and critical thinking about the material presented by the guest lecturer and (a) the relationship with theory learned in class, as well as (b) their future professional career direction.

References

As an example, for the module about future use of retired cane lands, references included:

For the module on impact assessment, references included:
FIELD TRIP

Case Study 3: Introduction to Planning

By Tim Perkins – Semester 1, 2103 – Edith Cowan University (ECU)

Student Cohort: First Year Undergraduates (18) Semester 1, 2013

Context/purpose
In 2012, the Centre for Planning at ECU undertook a significant review of undergraduate planning courses. As a result of this review three undergraduate courses were condensed into a single Bachelor of Planning for delivery from 2013 onwards. Student enrolments in 2013 were substantially lower compared with previous enrolments (45 in 2012). This course provides an introduction to planning knowledge and theory and the development of planning principles and practice. The unit includes a historical overview of planning practice within a variety of viewpoints but with a particular focus on the environmental, economic and social principles of sustainability. The unit focuses on planning practice within Western Australia but provides a national and international overview of planning practice.

Experiential Learning Principles
Purposeful and practice-theory dialectic
The unit’s purpose is to expose first year students to learning that reflects planning practices in Western Australia. Field trips are linked to assessments and provide the opportunity to develop a site analysis, structure plan, and interact with a range of industry professionals.

Student-centred
Guidance is provided by the unit coordinator on the content and structure of the assessment items, but students are required to work together in teams and develop working practices that allow them to produce meaningful assessments that will be reviewed and critiqued by planning professionals.

Application of theory/classroom knowledge
Students acquire planning knowledge and skills and apply them in the production of site analysis and structure plan.

Real world
Assessment topics are selected after discussion with planners from the City of Joondalup (CoJ) planning department. Locations have already been identified by CoJ planners as requiring redevelopment and in need of a structure plan.

Guided practice
Student groups work extensively with the unit coordinator and planning practitioners to develop a meaningful site analysis and structure plan that reflects CoJ strategic planning aims. Planning practitioners are available during semester to offer advice and guidance on assessment content and group behaviour.

Reflection
Students are required to reflect on their experiences as part of the assessment requirements.

Evaluation
Essay, site analysis, structure plan, presentation to students and planning practitioners

Community-university partnership
Main partnership is with City of Joondalup Planning Department. Other partnerships include RobertsDay, PlaceScape and Metropolitan Redevelopment Authority.

Activities
Assessment 2: Activity Centre site analysis – Students, working in groups of five team members, are required to produce a detailed site analysis of a suburban activity centre (a local shopping centre) in the Perth Metropolitan Region. Students are allocated an activity centre by the unit coordinator and a detailed structure and format for the site analysis that they must adhere to. Visits to all three sites are undertaken with presentations provided by the centre managers, local government planners, urban designers, open space specialists and transport planners. Students also undertake a ‘brain-storming’ activity to identify relevant data and information requirements and sources.

Assessment 3: Structure/Master Plan - Student groups are required to produce a Structure/Master plan for their selected Activity Centre. The plan needs to follow the structure and format of a local government plan as closely as possible whilst acknowledging the constraints imposed by the limited time, resources and knowledge available to first year students. Format includes: project vision; planning and land use principles; proposed development and infrastructure changes; main outcomes; changes required to MRS, R-codes, District Planning Scheme; timeline; and organisational responsibilities.

Assessment 4: Presentation – Each group is required to give a 20-minute presentation describing the activity centre, details of the Structure/Master plan produced, and reflecting on the experiences involved. Planning professionals from the local council (City of Joondalup) are invited to the presentations and provide written and verbal detailed feedback to the student groups. This includes feedback about the technical content of the Structure/Master plan in the context of both the District Planning Scheme, State Planning Policies etc. In addition, planning professionals are involved in marking this final assessment item.

Assessment
Essay: 1500-word essay covering the role of local and state government in urban and regional planning in Western Australia. Essay also aims to develop learning skills such as knowledge acquisition, synthesising information from multiple sources, critically assessing information, and referencing – 20%

Site analysis: Groups have to undertake a 2000 word detailed site analysis of one activity centre in Perth metropolitan region. Format and structure determined by unit coordinator - 30%

Structure/Master plan: Group produces a 1500 word structure/master plan providing details of future development for the Activity Centre - 30%

Oral presentation: as described above - 20%
Student Feedback

Students recognised the value of developing and applying complex planning and interpersonal skills at an early stage of their university studies. All students recognised the value of field-trips with their ability to link classroom-based learning with real-world examples. ‘It was relevant to the course and gave another perspective on learning about planning.’ However, many students wanted to link the field-trip directly to an assessment task and saw little value in a field-trip for its own sake, even when it clearly linked to learning outcomes and unit contents. A number of students wanted the field trips to focus on a wider range of development activities including infrastructure planning. The processes of planning included meetings with stakeholders, assessment of development applications, planning and development committee meetings were also identified as being of major importance.

Students valued the chance to work on real locations which had already been identified by CoJ planners as requiring the development of a Structure/Master Plan. The three Activity Centres had already been identified by Planning Managers at the CoJ as requiring substantial redevelopment. Whilst not formally requiring a detailed Master Plan, council planners welcomed the activities of the ECU student groups and asked to attend the formal presentations and provide formal feedback. Students stated that the site visits and assessments gave them an insight into ‘real life jobs’, ‘the chance to see a real life perspective of what we learn in class’ and ‘linking theory to a real site’.

Number of site-visits

The majority of students stated that they wanted to see the same number or more site visits taking place in the unit. Only one student responded by stating that fewer site visits should be made during semester. That student stated that ‘site visits are too brief and it would be better to focus on one rather than visiting three sites in one session’. All other students responded that they found site visits useful, interesting and of direct relevance to their studies and assessments.

Ideas for further enhancing the experience

- Include a range of activity centres or locations with a wider range of land uses or potential land uses rather than focussing solely on a retail/shopping centre.
- Spend more time at each activity centre by making it a whole day trip.
- Review marking regime for Assessments 2 - 4 to include individual student contributions to be recognised.
- More structured allocation of student roles and responsibilities.

Students stated that the assessments were challenging at times given the level of discipline and generic knowledge required, and the range of interpersonal skills applied. Suggested improvements include:

- More detailed briefing notes about the Activity Centres and their planning context before the site visit
- Wider range of planning professionals on site during the field-trip rather than during lectures
- Some students requested more interaction during the field-trip including quizzes, multiple-choice and short-answer tests.
- Select activity centres with a wider range of current and potential land use options.
- Group tasks, roles and responsibilities need to be formalised and incorporated into the marking system.
- Introduce marking system that more accurately reflects both personal and group contributions to assessments.

Industry input and site-visit location

Many students recognised the value of planning professionals participating in the site visits. A number stated that they would prefer the visits to be hosted entirely by planning professionals. Several students also recognised the relative isolation of Perth and stated that an inter-state or international field-trip would provide valuable learning opportunities which are not available in the Perth Metropolitan Region.
Case Study 4: International Study Tour

By Trevor Budge – Semester 2, 2012 – La Trobe University

Student Cohort: Second Third and Fourth Year Undergraduate Planning Students (20) Semester 2, 2012

**Context/purpose**
This case study is an elective accredited subject in the undergraduate planning degree comprising a three-week study tour to the west coast of Canada and USA. The study included:

- a visit to the town of Hay River in the North West Territories – inside the Arctic Circle, to examine life and the planning agenda in remote communities,
- a mini study of Vancouver’s downtown neighbourhoods with noted planner Gordon Price (a real highlight)
- a design charrette in Spokane with the assistance of the City of Spokane and a presentation to planning students at the Eastern Washington University
- a week long program at Portland State University in Oregon focusing on transport, urban regeneration, agriculture and food and a meeting with the newly elected Mayor of the City

**Experiential Learning Principles**

**Purposeful and Practice-theory dialectic**
Students undertook an international field study tour where many of the issues that they had been exposed to in class and through assignments were presented in real life situations, planning in practice and by exposure to practitioners.

**Student-centred**
Students were provided with numerous opportunities to increase their professional and personal skill levels e.g. communication in writing, speech, problem solving and using evidence to evaluate arguments and perform critical analysis.

**Real world**
Students met practicing planners, were taken on guided tours and had reflection sessions on what they had observed and learnt.

**Guided practice**
Students were guided by direct access to academic teaching staff and access to Council and community strategies and design requirements responding to local circumstances.

**Reflection**
Reflective practice was encouraged through opportunities to share information between staff and students and in the reflective exercise that students completed.

**Evaluation**
Student work was evaluated informally and formally through a number of formative and summative tasks.

**Community-university partnership**
Students were able to observe first-hand how two universities had formed strong community – university partnerships on a number of projects and teaching collaborations.

**Activities**

1. **Structure Program of fieldwork and research delivered by a partner university.** This study tour was the first to incorporate a structured week-long class conducted by another university - Portland State University. This program included guest presenters on a diverse range of topics; transport, urban growth boundary, food strategies and urban regeneration. The CBD university campus location enabled a series of local fieldwork research projects with students bringing these back to a classroom situation for discussion and examination.

2. **Mini Urban Design Exercise** - students undertook a group work local fieldwork and research exercise in Spokane City eastern Washington State. Students were briefed by City Council officials and then undertook detailed site visits with local planners. In the afternoon the students prepared an urban design response and strategy for the review area and then presented that work in the evening to a post graduate class of planners conducted by one of the city planners in the planning program at Eastern Washington University

3. **Guest Presenter and Conducted City Tour** - Students participated in an extended walking tour of downtown Vancouver with Gordon Price, Director of the City Program at Simon Fraser University.

4. **Presentations by City Officials** - At Hay River, North West Territories Canada, students met with the City Manager who provided a detailed presentation on the Council’s community planning agenda and the issues with managing a remote community in a challenging physical setting. At Portland Oregon the newly elected Mayor of the City met with students to discuss his city planning agenda. Students then presented to students in the planning program at Portland State University on their observations of Portland and contrasted this with the planning agenda in Australia.

*Students travel inside the Arctic Circle!*
Student Feedback

Providing adequate briefings for students prior to the study tour.

- This is a consistent issue with international study tours. Prior to study tours students receive briefings on the personal and organisational challenges that they will face. Even having students that have participated on previous study tours to convey this information has limited impact on some students who display an unrealistic and at times disengaged approach - until they are on the study tour when reality strikes!

The study tour provided a fantastic opportunity to confront students with issues that otherwise they could really only study and research from afar.

- Given that our program is based in regional Victoria and most students come from a non-metropolitan background the program had an emphasis on examining large north American cities and particularly their downtown areas and the strategies to rejuvenate them in the context of the hollowing out of these areas - a situation that was unfamiliar for Australian students.

Students were required to adapt their understanding and approach to suit local circumstances.

- While planning has common practices and processes internationally, terminology is often diverse and the context and emphasis on different issues provide challenges e.g. water management, the role of local government, the role of the downtown and the fiscal arrangements and responsibilities between different levels of government. While these differences are often subtle it meant that preparing presentations for USA students and audiences required Australia students to tackle unfamiliar assumptions and norms.

Some students became disempowered by group work processes.

- Group work always presents problems in ensuring even performance and consistent engagement of all students. Additional briefing and guidance is needed prior to the study tour about what is expected and how cross cultural issues in a strange setting will have impact and how to develop and present ideas and strategies in unfamiliar settings.

Assessment

- Individual and group work in a mini urban design charrette in Spokane WA USA presented to post graduate planning students at Eastern Washington University

- Participation in a 5 day intensive program at Portland State University Oregon USA

- Individual reflective journal

- Individual essay on approved topic.

Ideas to further enhance the experience

Provide a half way check on their individual assignments to provide an interim process to ensure that students are on track – this has since been implemented in all study tours.

Establish an individual blog for each study tour as part of the assessment rather than a reflective journal at the conclusion of the study tour – this has since been successfully implemented in all study tours.

Provide more guidelines on the forms of the presentation required rather than relying on the natural competitiveness of students and groups to produce high quality presentations.
Case Study 5: Combined Unit Field Trip

By Tim Perkins – Semester 2, 2012 – Edith Cowan University

Student Cohort: Third Year Undergraduates (17 students) Environmental Planning (6) and Urban Planning for Health (11) - Semester 2, 2012.

Context/purpose
A combined unit field trip to new, rapidly expanding suburbs in the northern suburbs of Perth, including Yanchep, Two Rocks, Alkimos and Shorehaven. These suburbs are located in the north-west corridor, an area identified in Directions 31 (current Perth metropolitan planning strategy) as a major growth corridor with a potential population increase to 250,000 by 2031. There are major planning, environmental and transport issues in this area. The combined field-trip studies the planning aspects of developing new suburbs into areas of environmental fragility and ways of incorporating built environmental forms beneficial to public health.

Experiential Learning Principles
Purposeful and Practice-theory dialectic
This is an area of major development with significant environmental, social and transport issues. A number of different planning approaches have been used including New Urbanism; higher density, more sustainable TOD-based models to the standard lower-density urban fringe developments

Student-centred
The field-trip location is selected by the unit coordinator but students are required to participate throughout, engaging with the planning professionals, academic staff and gathering information for their assessments.

Application of theory/classroom knowledge
Students study a range of planning theories, models and approaches in these and other planning units and the field-trip which gives them the opportunity to see how these have been implemented in substantial urban development projects.

Real world
The fieldtrip involves visiting a range of new urban developments on the Perth Metropolitan urban fringe. It enables students to view the application of urban planning models and approaches to real developments.

Guided practice
The field-trip is structured to incorporate participation with developers, planning practitioners and residents. The unit lecturer discusses the key aims and objectives of the field trip with the students before the trip takes place.

Reflection
Minimal. Students will have the opportunity to reflect on the developments during the field-trip and in the tutorial session the following week.

Evaluation
Standard student evaluation tool used for every unit.

Community-University Partnership
This field trip is being developed as part of a broader partnership with local government and developers in the Perth northern suburbs. One of the developers already has a substantial partnership with the Centre for Planning and other schools at ECU including health and social work.

Activities
Site analysis – Students, working in groups of four or five are required to produce a detailed analysis for a site located within the Yanchep/Two Rocks/Alkimos/Shorehaven area. The unit coordinator allocates an area within this location to students as well as a compulsory detailed structure and format for the site analysis. The site analysis must incorporate relevant planning information but the emphasis is on the environmental constraints and present opportunities. In particular, issues related to threatened and endangered fauna and flora, biodiversity, groundwater, climate change, and environmental resilience are emphasised.

Environmental plan - Students are required to produce an environmental plan for their selected site located within the Yanchep/Two Rocks/Alkimos/Shorehaven area. The plan needs to follow the structure and format of a standard environmental plan but after consultation with the unit coordinator may concentrate on issues such as sustainable transport, fauna and flora rehabilitation, public open space etc. Format includes: plan vision; planning and land use principles; environmental aims and objectives; main outcomes; timeline; budget and organisational responsibilities.

Presentation – Each group is required to give a 20-minute presentation overview of the site analysis and environmental plan, and reflecting on the experiences involved. Planning professionals from the local council (City of Wanneroo) and relevant development companies are invited to the presentations and provide detailed written and verbal feedback to the student groups. This includes feedback about the technical content of the environmental plan in the context of the District Planning Scheme, State Planning Policies, State and Commonwealth environmental policies and legislation. In addition, planning professionals are involved in marking this final assessment item.

Assessment
The assessment requirements for SCM3202 and PLN3606 were different but included:

- Essay: 1500 word overview of environmental planning, theories, models, policies and legislation – 20%
- Environmental site analysis: Student worked in groups to produce a 2000 word detailed environmental site analysis of one location in the Yanchep/Two Rocks/Alkimos/Shorehaven area - 30%
- Environmental plan: Student groups focussed on one over-arching theme such as active transport, sustainable transport, public open space for the location identified in the site analysis - 30%
- Oral presentation: 20 minute presentation of environmental analysis and plan including opportunities and constraints to staff, students and invited professionals- 20%
Student Feedback

Students recognised the value of field-trips and felt that it allowed them to view the application of classroom-based learning in a real-world context.

- All students recognised the value of field-trips giving them the opportunity to view development projects that had had applied environmental planning theories and models to the real-world. Students were able to view examples of New Urbanist, TOD, higher-density and mixed-use zoned development in the peri-urban fringe. A range of approaches were included to improve environmental sustainability and resilience in these urban developments. Students recognised that a foundation of knowledge and theory is essential but a field-trip can bring the subject to life in ways that a lecture or studio-based class may not.

Greater links between University, industry and local community.

- Participants from development companies and local government were very supportive providing time and financial support throughout semester. A number acknowledged the resource and time implications that could be involved with supporting a field-trip, but all were more than willing to participate. Residents and local small business owners were not invited to participate in 2012 and it is acknowledged that this should be addressed for future field-trips as a major community voice was lacking. This is particularly important as increasing numbers of residents move into the area and the housing and infrastructure becomes more established.

Differing views on connections between the field-trip, unit content, unit outcomes and particularly the assessments

- All students acknowledged the benefits of attending field-trips where knowledge gained in the lecture theatre, such as New Urbanism and Transit-orientated Development etc, could be viewed in a real-world context. However, some students expressed the view that every learning activity should be linked to the assessment items rather than as an activity broadly supporting unit content and learning outcomes. Thus, in their view, the real value of the field-trip was to provide information and opportunities for the successful completion of the assessment items. Field-trips which didn’t clearly articulate this benefit were deemed to be of limited or no-value to their learning.

Ideas to further enhance the experience

In 2014 it is unlikely that a joint field trip for SCM3202 and PLN3606 students will run as a result of a restructure of the Bachelor of Planning. Separate field trips will be run with each having a more defined focus on the context of the unit content. For the environmental planning unit, changes will include:

- Stronger partnerships between ECU, industry and government
- Encouraging wider participation of, and with, local community
- Field-trip to include a wider range of urban, rural and coastal locations to study the range of environmental management and planning issues in WA
- Greater opportunities for student reflection on the field-trip
- Considering including an international field-trip component to allow ECU students to experience a cross-cultural approach to environmental management and planning
- Unit coordinator to explore the development of longer and collaborative field-trips i.e. the Field School approach used by the University of Sydney School of Geosciences.

Resources


Case Study 6: Change in Urban and Rural Australia

By Andrew Butt – Semester 1, 2013 – La Trobe University

Context/Purpose

This case study relates to a field-based program exploring processes of socio-economic and environmental change in urban and rural Australia. The subject is based around two fieldtrips (Melbourne and Swan Hill region) and is intended to provide students with an intensive program of comparative examples of policy, social change and physical transformations in urban and rural settings. The experience involves meeting interlocutors on-site, being ‘in-place’ in often unfamiliar settings and engagement between students from a metropolitan and a regional campus of the university. Policy and planning issues are contextualized by this experience and students are expected to listen deeply to environments and non-experts in the community to engage with ideas that, at least on the surface, appear uncontroversial, yet reveal rich examples of interest.

Experiential Learning Principles

Purposeful and Practice-theory dialectic

The sites selected represent contrasting examples of contemporary Australian life, while also exemplifying eras of policy-making and their associated social imaginaries. The diverse examples include 1960s public housing, gentrifying post-industrial areas, new model-suburbia and declining irrigation regions, revealing links in policy approaches and economic restructure, yet stark contrasts in the fortunes of regions and their economic life and environments.

Student-centred

Students are required to immerse themselves in these areas where often, as passers-by, they had not considered the complexity of change and experience. The peer engagement, particularly between metropolitan and regional students required the negotiation of assumptions and priorities.

Real world

The visits required engagement with expert and non-expert locals, being within unfamiliar environments and consideration and critique of plans and policies in order to understand change.

Guided practice

Students were guided by academic teaching staff, local planners and by interlocutors including health workers and local politicians.

Reflection

Reflection was encouraged by the shared group time at the end of each day, with set questions for each visit and connected readings, as well as informal discussions in a more social setting.

Evaluation

Student work was evaluated through the development of a themed and text-informed field journal.

Community-university partnership

The study sites provided opportunity for the university to develop and reinforce connections for student placements and additional project work (which has arisen in Swan Hill).

Activities

The central experiential activity was the two field trips (Melbourne and Swan Hill) that were presented as a connected journey. This was intentionally presented as having both a spatial and temporal aspect as a means to connect seemingly disparate geographies through the socio-economic and policy settings that influence them. For example, in this regard Twentieth Century industrialism, agricultural policy and public housing approaches could be contextualized, despite the spatial differences. Importantly the stories told by interlocutors (typically of social and economic change) could be seen within a context that allowed students to understand linkages that were not immediately evident.

Additionally, experiencing these in their setting required genuine listening and reflection.

Specific activities included; a journey through Melbourne to four sites (Docklands, an inner city high rise public housing area, a 1960s multi-cultural and industrial area and a ‘master-planned estate’) along with the Swan Hill region (a shrinking Mallee town, a grain farm, a last generation fruit block, an Aboriginal health centre, a ‘food systems’ forum). Each visit included specific pre-reading and a chance to meet and discuss issues with local interlocutors.

Importantly, students gained experience in listening to non-experts and considering the links between physical environments, social life and economic change. Most students, for example, had never been to a high rise public housing estate, or a 10,000ha grain farm, yet were able to see that the processes of change effecting these (in these cases market-led regeneration and grains industry privatization) had connection through economic policy and in turn shaped their social and physical environments. Small groups of students did not always share the same experience or activity at each site, but were required to offer peer reflection in a daily forum and back in the classroom setting.

The engagement students achieve with each other as a cohort (particularly as a cross-campus study group) and through the environments that they operate within is a valuable student experience for working within diverse communities within Australia – offering scope to see the range of professionalism in housing, planning, community development and environmental management. Students also gain skills in learning from community knowledge and the non-expert framing of situations and change.
Student Feedback

Four themes emerged from the student discussions and feedback as explained below:

- **Students saw value in linking theoretical ideas to the field experience**
  - Student feedback included: Linking readings to the field experience was great; it provided a chance to use the examples; the trips proved very informative. More field trips would be valuable in any program as it puts learning into practice.

- **Students recognised the value of a contrasting, yet comparative approach - but not always.**
  - Some students recognised that linkages between places are not just geographic, but depend on the socio-economic circumstances at play currently, and in the past. Other students found such consideration difficult to conceptualise - making this clearer should be a priority for the subject, through stories, data and readings at the commencement.

- **Students saw value in meeting professionals and non-experts in the field, but sometimes needed help to link this to university**
  - Using field interlocutors is useful, and was deliberately unstructured at times, seeking a broad reflection of situations, policies and programs, rather than a targeted presentation to students. This was seen as valuable and insightful regarding the state of play in programs and places, but students often appeared uneasy with the expectations of what they were intended to learn - although peer discussions and future inclass activities allowed these to be untangled for many, but not all students. Learning to listen and analyse untargeted encounters requires thought and experience that is hard to develop rapidly.

- **Working in groups in a field setting was seen as more valuable than in-class group work**
  - Working in groups is typically seen as problematic, but shared group activities (especially without an associated group assessment) were identified by a number of students as valuable and necessary in this setting. This particularly mattered when students were able to develop a group reflection on an experience to discuss with other groups in the structured forums.

### Assessment

- Individual field journals based on specific daily themes and readings (30% for each). These require students to link readings with more experiential findings of place and examples.

- An essay topic designed by each student focussed on thematic issues for a specific type of Australian region: urban, suburban, peri-urban, rural, remote

### Ideas to further enhance the experience

Utilise the cross-campus cohort experience more effectively. While students are not necessarily from an urban or rural background, the priorities and assumptions brought by each group do reveal differences that add to discussion and debate, especially when in the field.

A clearer emphasis should be placed on learning from non-expert interlocutors and from ‘reading’ physical environments. This can become a professional skill that creates adaptability and awareness for a more reflexive practice.
Case Study 7: Development Processes Studio

By Eedo Coiacetto – Semester 2, 2012 – Griffith University

**Context/purpose**
This 13 week studio project is taught one full day per week to 45-70 students. It is a guided experiential learning activity to create an assessable product – a land development feasibility study - in four progressive and assessable steps. Assessment is formative and summative and emulates real planning and consulting processes. The sub-activities include guest speakers (e.g. finance, planning), design, field visits, team and individual work, project tendering, research (eg market, finance, site, planning and legislation), data and risk analysis, project planning, financial appraisal, consultation, formal and informal presentations.

**Experiential Learning Principles**

**Purposeful** The purposes include to: • Provide a sound and practical understanding of development through project-based experiential learning (since planning and development are inextricably intertwined) • Equip students with professional skills • Prepare students for real life planning projects with situations of uncertainty, where answers are not known in advance, and where there may be multiple solutions to unfamiliar real problems • Use, develop and apply planning and cross-disciplinary skills and knowledge (e.g. team work, site analysis, financial appraisal, spreadsheets, plan interpretation, master plan design, project planning, strategic thinking) • effectively communicate orally, graphically and in writing

**Practice-theory dialectic** The learning approach interplays deduction and induction. By deduction, students apply the theory provided by guest speakers, lecturer and the textbook to the chosen project. They inductively develop new insights and ideas (theory) from the studio project. Studio learning thus involves both applying theory and developing theory to guide practice just as occurs in practice (Bolan 1980).

**Student-centred** The studio prepares students for real work practice via learning in a supported environment receiving iterative and ongoing feedback.

**Real world** A real site and project is chosen every year. Assessment mimics real world processes and practices. Students tackle complex and messy real world problems.

**Guided practice** Students learn to practice with under guidance from guest lecturers, the teaching team and text-book.

**Reflection** As the studio progresses students’ perspectives change as they gain insights into planning and development, and they gain professional skills. Over the years, different methods were used to reflect on these inductive insights and learning (e.g. discussion boards, summary sessions, informal discussion). These were never formally assessed since the course is demanding.

**Evaluation** Studio involves ongoing informal assessment. Formal assessment is formative and summative: (i) Response to client brief (written team report) (ii) Preliminary development proposal (written and oral team reports) (iii) Design (individual) (iv) Final report and financial appraisal (written and oral group reports)

**Community-university partnership** Some projects have been collaborations with community groups or real clients (e.g. Archerfield Airport users, Logan City) but for ethical reasons, the client is usually a fictitious but realistic one.

**Activities**
The whole studio is an experiential learning activity. Expanding on this experiential nature, in 2012 Yammer (akin to Facebook) was trailed as an on-line tool to:

1. facilitate communication and sharing of information, resources, documents and ideas between all students; and
2. reflect on and capture the inductive learning and change of thinking that happens as students work through the project. Students were invited to reflect on the following questions (elaborated in text-book Coiacetto 2012 pp. 28-31):

(a) What skills are you gaining? What are you able to do that you couldn’t do before or do as well before? (add to your CVs)
(b) What are the substantial learning outcomes? What do you know that you didn’t before?
(c) How is the process changing you as a person and how is your resilience changing?
(d) What are the ethical dimensions and issues of development and planning?
(e) Can you now see things from another’s perspective?
(f) What insights have you gained about planning and development?
(g) How has your understanding changed of what planning is about and how development occurs?
(h) What do you feel as your work through the project?
(i) How can planners influence the development process for the greater public good?

For students in ENV 2067 and ENV 7127 the use of Yammer was voluntary and not assessable because of the demanding nature of the courses. Students in the postgraduate 7128 ENV course had a 10% assessment item which involved uploading a 5 minute video to Yammer reflecting on one or two of questions (d), (f), (g) or (i) above.

Via the studio process, the complex macro- and micro-scale forces that shape cities unfold before the students: e.g. why and how developers target sub-markets (and how that shapes cities)
Student Feedback

Students find the studio provides a powerful experiential learning experience

- This is a very challenging studio but feedback from student evaluations and from graduating students is very positive.
- In evaluations students regularly report that they learned a great deal in the studio. Typical comments are "I learned so much" or "the amount I learned was phenomenal."
- In externally conducted exit surveys, graduates regularly report that studios are one of the best aspects of the final planning program of study at Griffith University.

A few students have difficulty with the studio mode of teaching

- Where there is negative student feedback about the studio, it usually reflects a student difficulty with the studio and experiential mode of learning. A few students prefer a passive mode of learning to what is expected in the studio. "I had to do the learning myself" is a typical way of expressing this complaint.

Students understood the purpose of using Yammer in the studio

- Feedback from student evaluations of their experience of Yammer showed that they understood what Yammer was for. For example: "to answer questions from the lecturer and share in conversations with other students"; "to show what we learnt, express ideas, make friends with other class mates, share ideas"; and "to write down & record all your thoughts & experiences throughout the course & to see what other people have learnt."

In its first trial, very few students used Yammer as a communication tool and none used it as a reflection tool

- Only 12% of students used Yammer to communicate and to share files.
- Few students responded to the questions posted by the lecturer on Yammer despite repeated reminders.
- Various reasons were given for not using it: lack of time; unwillingness to try new software; perceived software user unfriendliness; preference for in-person communication; preference for alternative software such as Facebook, Google Documents, email and Dropbox to facilitate group interaction; timidity about sharing thoughts in a collective forum.

The quality of assessable reflective videos posted by postgraduates demonstrate the value of formal reflection on experiential learning

- All four of the postgraduate videos revealed that students had developed revealing, interesting and useful insights into planning and development through the experiential learning activity presented by the studio.
- One of these videos was particularly sophisticated and insightful and presents the kind of insight that cannot be gained from book learning.

References and Resources


Ideas to Further Enhance the Experience

Videos show students can inductively develop sophisticated insights via experiential learning; some reluctance to use the Yammer tool may be due to cohort characteristics/dynamics and so one should not overly generalize from one case; students may resist conducting activities that are not assessable; and capturing the lessons and skills development that emerge in a busy and demanding experiential learning course context remains an elusive but desirable goal despite the setbacks.

At the start of semester, show all the students the best reflective video prepared by past postgraduate students; continue to require postgraduate students to create a short, assessable reflective video on the studio’s lessons; and conduct short, reflective, structured, in-class reflective sessions every 2 to 3 weeks or at opportune “teachable moments” (Viswanathan et al. 2012) to share, consolidate and record the students’ and teaching team’s inductive learning experiences from the previous weeks.
Case Study 8: Children in their Environments
By Julie Rudner – Semester 1, 2013 – La Trobe University
Student Cohort: Third and Fourth Year Undergraduates (14) and First Year Postgraduates (3)
Semester 2, 2012

Context/purpose
This case study showcases a unique subject that was developed so students had a deeper understanding about children’s and young people’s needs, views, use and aspirations in relation to their environments. The majority of students had participated in field trips where they conducted consultation activities with adults, so they had some knowledge of engagement processes. However, the balance between structure and flexibility, and ways of communicating with children and young people is different to working with adults. There is also a need to meet secondary curriculum requirements and allocated class times. The main objective for this subject was to train students to conduct child and youth-centred participatory planning and design activities. All students were required to obtain a ‘Working with Children’ check to participate in the subject.

Experiential Learning Activities
Student-centred and child-youth centred
All activities were child and youth-centred. Students became planning and design ‘experts’ by sharing their knowledge so the secondary school students learned enough to contribute meaningfully. The university students respectfully reflected the ideas of the high school students in their designs.

1. Policy Review – Students were required to identify the Articles from the 1989 Convention on the Rights of the Child that were relevant to planning, and then select one Article to detail its relevance to specific planning theory and practice issue. Students were also required to conduct a content analysis of a local government planning scheme to identify the position of children and young people within spatial policy, and comment on their findings. Students were shocked at the invisibility of children within planning policy, and became aware that unconscious bias can influence decision-making in planning.

2. Children’s Consultation Plan – A genuine Council tender that sought professional services to plan and conduct community consultation with children and young people in an outer suburban area of Melbourne was provided to students. As part of their assessment, they had to prepare a consultant’s response that addressed the requirements of the brief, including outreach, timelines, sequence, staffing, budget, ethics and risk. Students were surprised at the actual costs and time associated with conducting consultation, especially with children.

3. Observations of Children’s & Young Peoples’ Play – To understand children’s and young people’s play, students visited the Melbourne Museum to learn about the history of play, were taught how to play by education staff at Ian Potter Children’s Garden, and conducted their own site observations that focused on physical, social and spatial relations. Students understanding of how children and use space deepened. They also experienced the discomfort of socio-cultural matters inhibiting children’s and young people’s use of public space as it relates to public concerns over abductions and molestation.

4. Master Plan, Design and Grant Application – Students were required to work with young people at two local secondary schools to develop a master plan for their outdoor spaces, a more detailed design for a specific area within the master plan, and to develop a grant application in relation to their plan and design, including staging, labour and material costs. As part of the process, a highly respected landscape architect specialising in play space design conducted a one day seminar, and returned with a colleague to evaluate the students’ work. A landscape architect from local council trained students in the budget process.

5. Consultation with Young People – In order to complete the master plan and design students conducted site visits. For the visits, students were formed into groups of three and were matched with 3-6 secondary school students, depending on the school. During the site visits the university and secondary school students conducted physical and social site analyses, discussed possibilities for the site, reviewed materials and equipment, and developed preliminary designs.
Student Feedback

Students developed a new relationship with planning and design:

• "...when I did Children in their Environments I really enjoyed it and didn’t quite realise that this was an aspect of planning. Because of this, I now know which direction I want to work in when I gain my degree."

Students wanted to continue the project to help the schools:

• Students realised there were political, economic and risk management constraints related to infrastructure provision, so they wanted to continue the project over the following semester by meeting with representatives from the education department to persuade them of the importance of well-designed outdoor play and education spaces, and raise funds, labour and materials for works.

University students represented aspirational opportunities for the high school students:

• "Like many teenagers they had little understanding of planning. However as they started to talk about what they liked/disliked about their school, what functioned well/what didn’t, what needs changing and why, they were clearly enjoying the experience. I was excited to tell them that 'guys, this is planning! the things we are talking about and thinking about is planning!'"

Students learned to balance conflicting demands:

• Students had to learn to balance the imaginative ideas of enthusiastic high school students with their 'professional' view, the 'client' (school) and 'user groups' (secondary school students and teachers) to achieve practical applications that incorporated restrictions surrounding access, maintenance, surveillance and broad-based appeal.

Students found the project personally rewarding:

• "I really enjoyed the urban design perspective of it all; particularly working with a group of people who often have no experience or engagement with the planning system. It was a practical subject; the designs could be used for the schools, the grants could be used, we presented to professionals in the field who gave us great feedback that dealt with the practicalities of it all".

Assessments
Practicums: Worksheet (including policy review); development of consultation process; consultation with students; play observation – 40%
Project plan/group code of conduct – 10%
Presentation – 5%
Initial design – 30%
Final design with explanation of amendments – 10%
Review of project plan & self/team assessment – 5%

Ideas to further enhance the experience
Schedule the museum and garden visit to learn about play earlier in the subject.
Provide instruction at the more detailed design level and have students produce a more detailed design product.
Commence subject earlier to match schools terms better.
Place more emphasis on professionalism in presentation.
SIMULATED PROJECT

Case Study 9: Introduction to Planning and Design

By Trevor Budge – Semester 1, 2013 – La Trobe University
Student Cohort: First Year Undergraduates (35) Semester 1, 2013

Context/purpose
This case study is an assessed project worth 20% of the total subject, undertaken as group work. Much of the subject was delivered in a traditional lecture/tutorial/workshop format. Changes to subject content, presentation and assessment were made to provide students with a planning, design and presentation component. Groups of 5-6 students undertook a semester long project to research, plan, design, cost and present a bicycle path from the main University campus to the Bendigo Hospital where La Trobe also has a campus. Groups were given different cost scenarios to encourage them to explore low cost solutions based on minimum works THROUGH to solutions that provided for expensive infrastructure and designs. Groups worked off standard costing that were supplied. Each group was required to prepare a report and make a presentation justifying their selected route and design.

Activities
1. Whole Class Site Visit – a comprehensive site visit with the whole class was undertaken – travelling along the potential routes and examining options at key locations. Students undertook detailed observations of critical places on the potential routes and discussed a range of planning and design solutions and their cost implications.
2. Individual and Group Site Visits – each group undertook follow up site visits and evaluated route options. Some students from each group cycled the route options recording information relating to distance, time taken, congestion points, road marking options, traffic signaling, bicycle path design, signage and facilities. Students investigated a range of bicycle facilities and road treatments and markings around Bendigo and along the route options to determine their applicability according to criteria such as safety, ease of use, legibility, attractiveness to cyclists, cost and convenience.
3. Costing Proposals - each group was required to cost every element of their design from construction of bridges and cycle paths to line marking on roads and intersections using best available costing guides. Each group had to then evaluate those costs against the requirements of the brief they had been given and make judgments about what to include in their proposal.
4. Student Report - students were required to produce a report and present a power point presentation to the rest of the class explaining how their group had researched the problem, the selected design route and why they chose that route, route treatments and costing of each proposal.

Experiential Learning Principles

Purposeful and Practice-theory dialectic
Students undertook a field trip and were presented with material setting out the role of cycling in an integrated transport land use strategy setting, the capacity of cycling to provide a realistic alternative to other forms of movement, and a range of cycle path designs and component costing. Relevant material was also obtained from the local Council.

Student-centred
Students were provided with numerous opportunities to increase their professional and personal skill levels e.g. communication in writing, speech, problem solving and using evidence to evaluate arguments and perform critical analysis.

Real world
The site visit and follow up individual and group fieldwork and observation provided opportunities for students to gain authentic planning experiences, feedback and assessment.

Guided practice
Students were guided by academic teaching staff and access to Council’s strategies and design requirements.

Reflection
Reflective practice was encouraged through classroom opportunities to share information and through meetings between groups and the lecturer.

Evaluation
Student work was evaluated informally and formally through a number of formative and summative tasks.

Community-university partnership
The project required students to relate a specific university need to a wider community agenda.
There were difficulties in balancing the information needs of students.

**On the one hand the exercise sought to provide opportunities and challenges for students in finding information themselves as against simply providing them with the information. Getting the right balance is difficult.**

Students better understood the subtlety and complexity of the choices they were making because they also had to relate these to costs.

**Feedback indicated that many groups had undertaken detailed debates as they tried to relate the scenario brief they had been given when they tried to relate costs to issues of safety and convenience.**

### Assessments
- Each group made presentations to the whole class and two other staff members in the Planning Program joined the Subject Lecturer to form a panel of three ‘judges’ who scored the content and presentations.
- Each group’s written report was assessed against standard criteria for a design report.
- Each student was required to identify what he or she had individually contributed.

One of the group reports was submitted as an entry in the PIA (Vic Division) 2013 Planning for Excellence Awards, Outstanding Tertiary Student Project – Borrie Prize, an award which is usually only given to fourth year entries, it was awarded an unprecedented Commendation.

### Ideas to further enhance the experience
- Provide an opportunity half way through the semester to facilitate the students providing an interim report to ensure that they were on track rather than relying on meeting with the lecturer.
- Provide more guidelines on the form of the group presentation required rather than relying on the natural competitiveness of students and groups to produce high quality presentations.
- Provide examples of other bicycle path designs and costing information earlier in the process.
- Resources in the form of Australian publications and standards for bicycle path design are readily available on the web, students should be directed to one preferred resource rather than have students randomly select different ones, because it became necessary to agree on a standard set in order to prepare comparable projects.

### Ensuring that students place issues in the appropriate perspective

**Many students appeared to have difficulty balancing big picture strategy issues against detailed design. Students found it challenging to determine the key criteria for the design and costing solutions.**

### Some students became disempowered by group work processes

**Group work always presents problems in ensuring even performance and consistent engagement of all students.**
Experiential learning in planning education: Resources and tools for good practice

Case Study 10: Planning & Environmental Law

By Johanna Rosier – Semester 1, 2013 – University of the Sunshine Coast

Student Cohort: Second year undergraduate students across five programs (55), Semester 1, 2012

**Context/purpose**
The Planning and Environmental Law course is a second year course undertaken by students across planning, property studies, Engineering, Environmental Science. The second assignment consists of a group project in which students work in groups of three or four to complete a development application for submission to Council and then write an assessment report. The project originated from ideas about problem based learning in which students experiment with processes that they can expect to experience in their careers. The students learn how to do a site assessment using Smart EDA website. They apply ‘PD online’ and ‘My maps’ programs to obtain overlay and zoning information about their site. Groups were required to carry out a planning assessment to analyse the degree to which the development proposal complies with planning requirements. Individual students also kept a diary to reflect on their performance in the project.

**Activities**
1) Following feedback from 2012 students about the complexity of the group project, the second assignment was changed. In the 2013 offering, groups were given a complete planning file including the development application all the impact assessment, completed advertising requirements and all site documentation normally required by Council. Each group was simply asked to check if documentation was complete.

2) Students were provided with the group marking checklist so groups knew what detail was needed in their final report about the development (compliance with requirements of Queensland’s Integrated Development Assessment System, Compliance with Council’s information and notification requirements, and Council’s decision notice).

3) Students were also provided with the marking checklist for their individual diaries in which they were asked to comment on their performance in the group; how they contributed to ideas and tasks, and what would they (as individuals) do differently next time in terms of relationship management within the group, tasks or project design.

The project ran for five weeks during which time groups were asked to report regularly on progress in tutorials. The progress report idea was implemented because student feedback in previous years indicated that students asked for more support in tutorials to complete the project.

**Experiential Learning Principles**

- **Purposeful and Practice-theory dialectic**
  The purpose of the project is to expose students to the types of government processes and databases they would experience in real world on graduation.
  - **Student-centred**
  - **Application of theory/classroom knowledge**
  - **Real world**
  - **Guided practice**
  - **Reflection**
  - **Evaluation**
  - **Community/University Partnership** principle not applied.

Guest lecturer provided information about the development application process and each stage of the assessment process.

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Student Feedback

In 2013, the student feedback (17/54 students) demonstrates that in this, a second year course taught across five programs, students resented working on a large group project over five weeks of the semester. They had difficulties finding times to have group meetings, but did not want to use the allocated tutorials for a group meeting. The need to report weekly on progress of the group report was not favoured by everyone. In their diaries, some students noted that they should be able to work on the project when they wanted to – and prioritise other assessment tasks. Other students commented on the stress of working in groups in which one or two students had different priorities and had not wanted to complete the project until the last week.

“I appreciated the weekly opportunity to discuss this project because I have not done a planning course before. I had difficulty with the words used in the legislation, and had difficulty accessing Council databases. The lecturer’s support in this project reduced my stress.”

“I felt as though my ability to arrange my time was questioned by having to give a progress report, especially when I did not need assistance. Students should only have to check back if they request support.”

“I learnt a lot from this practical project. However, I found it difficult to ensure our group made weekly progress. By the end of the semester it was clear to us that, without weekly input, we would not have completed the project. It was quite an achievement.

Student Feedback in individual diaries shows a high level of stress about the effect of potentially poor group mark on the Grade Point Average of individuals seeking to achieve honours in their studies.

“I had a lot of difficulty accessing the databases which were not available during the period of the assessment. I had to informally provide evidence of the written information to all students at the beginning of the project. However, students requested that in future this issue should be highlighted more at the beginning of the project.

Ideas to Further Enhance the Experience

In 2014, the project will be changed again and internal assessment tasks will consist of two lesser individual projects – one to support student learning about dealing with development applications and the second will focus on making submissions about planning policy documents. Both tasks will be based on real world problems. The 2013 changes were simply not enough to reduce the problems of running a large group project in this multi-program course.

Because the content of other courses rely on completion of certain types of knowledge and skills (i.e. understanding Council databases) in this course, these skills will now be informally assessed in different ways.

The Course will also be restructured so teaching will be based on problem based learning using real cases-studies, offering greater opportunities for peer assessment techniques to evaluate learning outcomes.

Assessment

- Individual essay – 25%
- Group project – written group report 25%
- Individual diary of group project – 10%
- Examination at end of semester – 40%

Resources

WORK FOR A CLIENT

Case Study 11: Planning Theory, Process and Applications

By Andrew Harwood – Semester 1, 2013 – University of Tasmania

Student cohort: Postgraduate Graduate Diploma/Master of Environmental Planning; Graduate Diploma/ Master of Environmental Management (5 on-campus students) Semester 1, 2013

Context/purpose

KGA511 provides a foundation for advanced studies in environmental planning and management. Postgraduate students become adept at understanding, critiquing and working with different planning traditions, theoretical positions and approaches. This case study examines the introduction of a discrete 6-week ‘work for a client’ / ‘mini-studio’ exercise as an addition to the traditional lecture and workshop program format. The learning activity was designed to give on-campus students practical experience in planning processes and opportunities to apply theoretical learning to real-world problems. Information about the learning activity was obtained via three mechanisms: (1) student reflective writings; (2) student questionnaires (see the Appendix for copies); and (3) a face-to-face interview with the client.

Activities

In a trial of a new EL activity students acted as a consulting team and responded to the client’s brief to investigate options for improving open space planning in the local municipality. Specifically, students were to:

- investigate the planning issues associated with the provision of play opportunities for families,
- map the spatial distribution of Council playgrounds, and investigate strategies and options for improving play opportunities within the municipality.

Conducted over six weekly five-hour long workshop ‘studios’, the learning activity included:

- Introduction to open space planning, client expectations and deliverables, discussion and negotiation of the clients brief;
- Field trips to familiarise students with different kinds of open spaces, identify issues, and test options/ground-truthing’;
- Identification of relevant planning organisations, legislation, frameworks, instruments and methods;
- GIS skills, gap analysis and map production sessions with assistance from client and university GIS experts; and
- Professional presentation of findings to client staff and reflection on the learning activity.

The learning task was worth 25% of the overall mark for the unit. Assessment for the activity involved a student group presentation to the client.

Experiential Learning Principles

Real world

Students addressed a real world planning issue of concern to the client (a local government council). For example, the Council had never previously mapped the location of its playgrounds as a means to identify gaps in service provision.

Purposeful

The learning activity was designed to give students ‘hands-on’ practical experience with planning processes.

Practice-theory dialectic

Students had to seek out and understand relevant planning legislation, instruments, and methods, and apply these in a studio setting. For example, students gained experience in using spatial data to analyse a planning problem.

Student-centred

Working as a consulting team, students negotiated their own roles and responsibilities in addressing the clients brief.

Guided practice

Guidance was provided during the studio sessions by the lecturer, and additional expert guidance was provided by the client and specialised GIS practitioners.

Reflection

Students wrote a formal reflective piece at the end of the learning activity, which contributed to the assessment task.

Evaluation

Student learning was primarily evaluated via an assessed professional presentation to the client.

Community-university partnership

The learning activity provided an opportunity for the university to partner with a key local government agency to investigate planning issues.

Experiential learning in planning education: Resources and tools for good practice

Figure 1: Students participating in client-led field trip to understand the consulting brief (Photo: Andrew Harwood)
Student and Client Feedback

Students and the client valued the EL activity for the contributions that were made to addressing a real world problem

- "I am grateful to have been given the chance to work on a real life, current project. It was a really interesting, exciting project." (Student)
- "I also discovered how exciting it can be to work on an interesting, novel project and feel like I have greatly contributed." (Student)
- "It was really useful to have someone put the playgrounds on a map with a roughly walking-distance buffer around it. That was something that no one had done in Council." (Client)

Students gained valuable insights into the complexity of planning processes

- "Having access to the client was useful as he offered rich insights into the role of the planner, in the context of a real issue. Also, the local nature of the problem made it more relevant than a hypothetical case study." (Student)
- "I developed an understanding and appreciation of the process of consulting with a client. This process was something I had been anxious about for my career in planning. (Student)
- "There was a real mix of theoretical stuff that students had to go and find. We then had a bit of technical 'how to', in terms of GIS. And then we were also able to go and jump in the bus and go and visit these places. We were able to mix it up; it wasn’t just a series of lectures working through something from an academic point of view. It was, in many ways, exactly how we work." (Client)

Students valued the group work...

- "I really enjoyed working with other students to achieve a group product. I felt I learned a lot from the group - in terms of different approaches to the problem, and also because I was able to learn more about my own strengths/weaknesses." (Student)
- "The group work dynamic was certainly challenging at times, but it was a positive learning experience. Perhaps cultural differences led to valuable contributions in terms of local knowledge, ideas and leadership. Being able to reflect on this when problems arose was useful, and I think I developed some empathy and acceptance of the range of capacities as the project went on." (Student)

...but needed more guidance in how to accomplish tasks collectively

- "This was one of the harder group projects I have experienced. It can be very difficult to complete the amount and quality of work required when others lack initiative, or feel uncomfortable speaking up. I learnt that cultural differences in the expected level of participation can create roadblocks to the flow of work and that developing an understanding of people’s work style is important for group function." (Student)
- "There was not enough time or support to assist less confident members of the team to engage and contribute." (Student)

The EL activity resulted in useful and unexpected outcomes for the client and students

- "There is value in the networking and the connections...one of the students is now coming back to do her professional placement with us." (Client)
- "It was a chance to put open space planning on the radar." (Client)
- "I was surprised what the students came up with as a fresh set of eyes looking at the problem." (Client)
- "It was a confidence thing...it helped me to better understand what my role [as a GIS practitioner within Council] can be." (Client)
- "As a Council, we have not really used GIS as an analysis tool. We have kind of used it to look and to make maps." (Client)

Figure 0.1 Spatial data product by students for client – location of Council playgrounds and identified gaps in service delivery

Ideas to further enhance the experience

- Give plenty of time to refine the brief with the client so that it is ‘just right’. The brief needs to be wide enough to encompass the learning outcomes required for the unit/course, but also specific enough so as to produce something of value for the client. Also, the brief needs to be not so arduous that students are overwhelmed by their internalised sense of the client’s expectations, and not so easy that students don’t get the experience of the complexity of planning problems.

- Take the students to the client’s workplace for the initial task brief so as to increase the real world experience.

- Introduce an additional session early in the learning activity on group roles, responsibilities and dynamics so as to encourage students to reflect on working as a team.

- Have more time after the final presentations for student and client discussion and reflection on the learning activity.
Case Study 12: Public Participation

By Claudia Baldwin – Semester 2, 2012 – University of the Sunshine Coast

Context/purpose
This course provides a theoretical basis, case studies, and practical skills in participatory decision-making and conflict resolution. The curriculum includes development of professional leadership skills in terms of facilitation, consultation, participation, consensus building, negotiation, and conflict resolution in informal, formal and regulatory settings.

These skills are required in a range of contexts including collaborative planning and management; policy development and strategic planning; sustainability and systems approaches; development and impact assessment; meetings and group decision making; and resolving multi-party differences.

Experiential Learning Principles

Purposeful and Practice theory dialectic
In-class theory was complemented by case studies of practice and weekly skill development, leading to the practical consultation exercise by Week 8. Nature of the issue, purpose and audience determined the level and type of consultation required.

Student-centred Students were involved in problem solving and applying skills by stepping into the professional role and then reflecting on the process and outcomes.

Real world Students worked for a specific stakeholder group (client) gathering and interpreted data and provided feedback to the group.

Guided practice Time was allocated in every tutorial for group work and teacher guidance. Case studies and guest lecturers provided real examples of professional applications.

Reflection Active learning ‘facilitated’ activities encouraged individual and group reflection at the end of each session. Inherent limitations of public participation and the methods were acknowledged which included time, representation, and resource constraints.

Evaluation Informal assessment included coaching students in skill development sessions. Formal group assessment was undertaken through written reports of stakeholder analysis, consultation plan, and consultation exercise. Also, there was formal assessment of group presentation. Stakeholder representatives attended and gave feedback on final student group presentations.

Community-university partnership Students provided consultation support and a report for the stakeholder group, the “Peregian Community”. It was a mutually beneficial learning opportunity.

Activities
1) Case studies were introduced through various means:
   a) lecturer - consultation on marine park planning
   b) guest presenter - experience with consultation on major infrastructure project
   c) students - from readings
2) Communication, active listening and facilitation skills were developed through tutorial use of worksheets, group role plays – (see attached worksheet)
3) Students undertook a stakeholder analysis and developed a consultation plan for a stakeholder group which required approaching and listening to consultation needs of the group
4) Students undertook a consultation exercise with a coastal village community at Peregian Beach in 2012. Students explored community perspectives into future growth and characteristics/values of the town in order to:
   i. Help Peregian Beach residents, visitors, local business owners, community groups and Council (i.e. stakeholders) to establish a consensus on local character, values and concerns held within the community.
   ii. Raise awareness of the advantages of a constructive and proactive development of a community- based plan that reflects values.
   iii. Assist the community in the decision-making processes.
   iv. Facilitate relationship and knowledge building between local stakeholders and the university.

Resources
Facilitation tips

Participation Continuum
- International Association for Public Participation (2003), IAP2 Core Values, accessed 14 April 2013 www.iap2.org/

Conducting Public Participation and Tools
- Sarkissian, W, Hirst, A, Stenberg, B & Walton, S 2003, Community Participation in Practice. New Directions, The Institute for Sustainability and Technology Policy, Murdoch University, Murdoch, WA.
Assessment

- Small group exercise developing a stakeholder analysis and consultation plan for a project – 10%
- Small group exercise undertaking a consultation with a community about a planning strategy (in 2012 – for the village centre), analyse the data and prepare a report on the process and outcomes of consultation. Each team includes an assessment of student team dynamics in the report – 30%
- Each team gives a class presentation on the outcomes – 10%
  (See case study on Conflict Resolution for other 50%)

Ideas to further enhance the experience

Give students experience with different consultation methods. In previous years students have used diverse methods such as Photovoice, or were able to choose whatever method their team felt matched their stakeholder’s needs. To ensure mutual benefits from the university-community partnership, students have ‘given back’ to the community for letting them ‘practise’ their skills and learn from them, by: a combined report to stakeholders and Council; or presentation of findings to their stakeholder group via a PowerPoint presentation, material for their website, or a poster. One year a student volunteered to co-author a publication for Queensland Planner. Feedback from a client was that ‘it is reassuring to know that planning students are being taught how to engage a range of people’.

Experiential learning in planning education: Resources and tools for good practice
ROLE PLAY

Case Study 13: Role Play in Conflict Resolution in Planning

By Claudia Baldwin – Semester 2, 2012 – University of the Sunshine Coast

**Context/purpose**
This activity is part of a Participation and Conflict Resolution course that provides a theoretical basis, case studies, and practical skills in participatory decision-making with conflict resolution a focus in the second part of the course, after students completed facilitation practice and undertaken a public consultation exercise (see Work for a Client Case Study Two: Public Participation).

**Experiential Learning Principles**
- **Purposeful** The purpose is for the students to ‘live’ different perspectives on a planning issue and to practise a range of facilitating and communication skills such as establishing ground rules, ensuring everyone is heard, ‘active listening’ and transitioning to ‘positive speak’ in order to solve a problem. It is made clear to the group that one cannot learn to mediate in one session.
- **Student-centred** The 9am to 4pm + days allowed a level of trust to develop within the class where it was clearly evident that students felt safe to explore role plays and conflict resolution methods, and refine questions. Many activities were purposely used so that the students could then add to their ‘toolkit’ of practice, which was developed in the class during the first 8 weeks (public participation).
- **Real world** A real conflict is chosen for the role play and learn that even apparently simple conflicts can be messy when dealing with personalities and values. Students learn that ‘there are different levels/types of conflict which require various approaches to resolution’.
- **Guided practice** The lecturer acts as a coach during the mediations, but this would be more effective with more coaches. In 2013, the students were given a comprehensive workbook and readings including set questions and activities to explore the commencement of the workshop. This enabled the facilitator to be able to cover theoretical aspects of the course and move into the role plays and mediation practice.
- **Reflection** The 3-hr workshop style segments were based heavily on active learning ‘facilitated’ activities that encourage individual and group reflection. ‘Key learnings’ were shared at both the beginning and end of each session.
- **Evaluation** The role play itself was not formally assessed. In 2012, as the block course was delivered by a guest lecturer, it was agreed that he would set the task and assessment criteria for the final assignment. This enabled the requirements and context behind the assignment to be discussed in greater detail during the 3-day workshop. One topic was provided to the students instead of them choosing their own topic which had in the past led to problems with consistency.
- **Community-university partnership** While the role play is about a past real proposed development with details provided by the local council, to reduce potential bias, the case is presented with fictitious names.

**Activities**
In 2011, this was held as an in-class tutorial over one or two weeks about a real development application to locate a large store near an existing shopping centre. In groups of five, each student in each group plays a different ‘character’ role: mediator, proponent, shire planner, submitter of an objection (competing store), and shopping centre owner. An explanation of each role and the individual’s concerns are handed out at the beginning of class. The person playing mediator facilitates the process. The lecturer moves from table to table, observing the process, guiding where necessary to keep the process going, and comments on the process and skills used. If there is time, the roles are rotated so more than one person has a chance at playing the mediator. Next class: discussion about what was learned, critiquing and providing constructive input into the role plays.

In 2012, it was run as part of a 3-day block course. The areas of role play included - Negotiation Role Play - Two Party; Positional Bargaining Role Play; Multi party Conflict scenarios and mediation scenarios. As an intensive course, students had time to get into the role and establish trust.

**Assessment**
Students are asked to analyse a conflict and recommend how to resolve it. They are to describe the project and source of conflict; parties to the dispute and their issues and interests; and identify techniques used or recommended to resolve the conflict. Reference should be made to concepts and literature included in this course.

The intent is that students explain how they would search for ‘common ground’, analyse and use BATNA, expand and assess options, in a CR process, not just step through a 6 or 10 step mediation process.

The marking sheet used in 2012 clarifies how students will be assessed.
- Quiz on readings – 10%
- Individual assignment on conflict resolution – 40%
Student Feedback

The role play experience and student feedback about the course reveal:

- Planners can be involved in a variety of conflicts. It is definitely a crucial skill for planners to have.
- Learning how to deal with conflict and people affected by conflict will be useful not only in the workplace but also other situations.
- The mediation process is useful to keep people out of the courts.

While most students enjoyed the role plays and found them beneficial, a few students had difficulty:

- The role plays were very helpful and quite enjoyable.
- I gained more confidence to handle conflict situations.
- The lecturer was experienced; gave practical exercises.
- The acting part of it was unnatural and difficult to do; observing a conflict resolution process would have been easier.
- Out of my comfort zone but got to understand the perspective of others in greater detail.

Students understood the nuances of conflict resolution:

- It was important to learn about the causes of conflict and best ways to deal with them.
- It’s important to seek an understanding of people’s values first. Most conflict derives out of a difference in values; people won’t compromise their values but will compromise on other things.
- There are different levels/types of conflict which require various approaches of resolution. Different strategies for different situations.
- Must be patient and never be biased.
- Do not have pre-arranged agenda; learn to get everyone involved; choose a process relevant to the situation.

Student reflection on what they learned was valuable and was enhanced by lecturer guidance:

- Gained a range of new skills; learned how to better negotiate; learned by doing.
- Lecturer was good at picking up on good/bad things being done; he knew his stuff.

Ideas to Further Enhance the Experience

Students would have benefited from observing a real conflict resolution (CR) process, to see how the facilitator conducted themselves however this is difficult since most CRs are confidential. Need to continue search for a video of a good resolution process. Learning from the role play experience could be more directed through a post-role play reflective exercise that focuses on what techniques worked well.

References and Resources

- Baldwin, C 2005, ‘How can we better address values and interests that underlie conflict in a dispute resolution process?’ The Arbitrator and Mediator, Vol. 24, No. 1, pp. 25–32.
Case Study 14: Urban Governance and Planning Law
By Trevor Budge – Semester 2, 2012 – La Trobe University
Student Cohort: Fourth Year Undergraduates (12) and First Year Postgraduate (14) Semester 2, 2012

Context/purpose
This case study relates to two-thirds of the content of this course about Statutory Planning. Most participating students have a foundational knowledge of the statutory planning system. While key statutory planning elements of the course are still delivered in a traditional lecture/tutorial/workshop format significant changes to subject content, presentation format and assessment were made. Given that all the students were also enrolled in a strategic planning subject it was decided to combine aspects of the two subjects. One of the objectives was to improve the demonstration of the links between strategic planning and statutory planning tools. The town of Trentham (about 800 people) was used extensively as a case study. Trentham is about one hour from Melbourne and is undergoing very considerable ‘tree change’ transformation and growth.

Experiential Learning Principles
Purposeful and Practice-theory dialectic
A case study town was used extensively to illustrate the issues associated with statutory planning. The town of Trentham (about 800 people) is undergoing very considerable tree change transformation and the community is engaged in extensive discussions about the future planning of the town.

Student-centred
Students were provided with numerous opportunities to increase their professional and personal skill levels e.g. effective communication in writing, speech and media, problem-solving, using evidence to evaluate arguments, perform critical analysis and synthesis and develop their own arguments.

Real world
The site visit and mock tribunal process provided opportunity for authentic planning experiences, feedback and assessment.

Guided practice
Students were guided by academic teaching staff and planning practitioners in their case study involvement.

Reflection
Reflective practice was encouraged throughout the experiential learning activities culminating in a reflective assessment piece in the student’s final report.

Evaluation
Student work was evaluated informally and formally through a number of formative and summative tasks.

Community-university partnership
The case study site provided opportunity for the university to partner with the community in exploring and discussing current planning issues within the town.

Activities
1. A Visit to the Town – a community group organised a series of briefings and discussion groups with students, conducted a walking tour with students recording information using iPads (part of learning opportunity linked to another Faculty project), and the La Trobe marketing department videoed the event.
2. Mock Tribunal Hearing - a highly experienced planner who has many years of experience in presenting cases at VCAT was appointed to be the Chair. Three cases were developed based on issues that the community and students had identified as contentious and realistic based on the fieldwork.
   1. Unit development in the older residential areas
   2. New shops in the main street
   3. Eco – village on the edge on productive farmland.

Students operated in small groups taking the role of proponents, objectors and Council, material from each group was circulated under strict timelines in a sequence replicating planning permit application processes. The Tribunal hearing audience included five representatives of the town who chose to sit through the cases to gain a better understanding of planning and how these issues were dealt with in a planning process.

3. Production of a Video Students worked in groups of 6-7 to produce a 4 minute video with the objectives to explain ‘What is planning and provide an introduction to the statutory planning process?’ As part of the whole process of liaising with the Trentham community a community information evening on planning was held which 40 Trentham residents attended. They were given a Planning 101 talk by academic staff, the strategic options for the town that had been developed were explained and the 4 student videos were played. Half the marks for the student videos were based on the audience assessment.

Students in the Bachelor of Strategic Communications course were assigned to work with the Planning students to assist with their script. This last element for reasons of timing was not successful but will be used in future exercises.

4. Student Report Students were required to produce a report explaining what they had done personally in each group assessment and were required to write a reflective piece on the
### Student Feedback

**Students wanted more interaction with the community**

- "I think at times it is easy to become cynical about “the community” when working in local government as the council is often on the receiving end of grievances and disappointments – I was very motivated and inspired by the knowledge and passion of Justin [one of the community members], and of course the other community members, and felt that while anyone can learn in a classroom the “principles of governance”, the true core of what we were learning about was displayed through this one on one interaction with the residents."

**Students understood the subtlety and complexity of conflicts because of site visits, and having met the community and hearing what they said**

- "This exercise highlighted to me the importance of communication throughout the process – it appeared that the channels of communication between the council and the community were shaky at best and that there was insufficient engagement despite the fact that the residents were a highly engaged group of people. The learning I took from this was that there can be a highly sophisticated system of governance, but without communication, education and genuine engagement from levels of government, there is no real governance."

**Students were intimidated by the mock tribunal hearing but appreciated the value of having greater realism**

- "I personally found the mock tribunal hearings to be a very valuable learning exercise. Not only did it enlighten me as to how much work you are required to put into your submission if you hope to put forward a half decent case, I also found that the tribunal hearing is not nearly as petrifying as I imagined it to be as essentially every individual is treated as an equal and everybody is given the opportunity to state their case without the threat of being directly ridiculed by an opponent."

**The video was seen as innovation and very challenging to distilling learning into real skills and working in a group**

- "I was asked at work by some of the older planners how making a video relates to planning and I said that people communicate in so many different ways and paper reports are becoming more irrelevant if you are trying to sell an idea to a community of people. Using “youtube” and social media is the next step from creating the glossy posters we sometimes do for subjects."

**Some students became disempowered by group work processes**

- "My learning is that a group of students is no different to any other group which needs to complete a project in that it needs a project manager, to decide what needs to be done, what resources are needed, how much time it has and then to get on with it."

### Assessment

- Individual contribution to statutory planning component Trentham exercise – 20%
- Small group exercise explaining statutory planning exercise to Trentham community through video production – 50%
- Community vote on video showing at meeting in Trentham – 15%
- A mock tribunal hearing – 15%.

### Ideas to further enhance the experience

- Tighten the video requirements. Length strictly applied and key messages. Require a draft. Increase the video from 15 to 20%
- Increase the pressure on the students to be better organized for the Tribunal hearing
- Increase the length of time for the first community consultation
- Be more explicit about what is required in the reflective exercise

### Resources

Video of the Trentham trip available at:
PRACTICUM – WORK PLACEMENT

Case Study 15: The Practice of Planning

By Tim Perkins – Semester 2, 2012 – Edith Cowan University

Student Cohort: Fourth (Final) Year Undergraduates (7) Semester 2, 2012

Context/purpose
This unit examines the responsibilities and role of practicing planners in Australia. It requires student participants to identify the main elements of planning practice in a private, public or not for profit sector workplace. It includes practice management, legislative, administrative and financial reporting, liability and indemnity requirements and human and technological resources. The unit takes a work-integrated learning approach to develop and apply the skills that have been acquired throughout the four-year degree. Students are guided by the unit coordinator to find a suitable planning practice in order to spend a ‘day in the life of a planner’. Students are required to develop and display a high degree of self-motivation and initiative in order to identify, and organise a placement in, an appropriate planning practice. The unit aims to apply the knowledge and theory of planning acquired during their studies.

Experiential Learning Principles
Purposeful and Practice-theory dialectic
The unit’s purpose is to expose Final Year students to a real world work experience. This course is the culmination of the experiences offered in the Bachelor of Planning program.
Student-centred
Students must use their initiative to organise a work-placement and develop their own criteria to reflect on practice experienced in the unit.
Application of theory/classroom knowledge
Students work on projects that require the application of knowledge and theory acquired in the classroom. A variety of projects can be involved but all involve real-world planning projects.
Real world
Students work with a mentor in a planning practitioner’s office for a minimum of one day. The students are exposed to real world statutory and strategic planning projects including urban design, urban development and sustainable transport projects.
Guided practice
Planning practitioner provides constructive feedback on workplace activities; Unit coordinator guides the student in gaining a work-placement, supports the development of criteria for reflection and supports the writing of the reflective journal as required.
Reflection
Students are required to reflect on their experiences as part of the assessment requirements.
Evaluation
Portfolio, reflective journal assessment, presentation to students and employers, interviews with planning mentors
Community-University Partnership
Partnerships with the private and public sector including City of Joondalup, City of Wanneroo, WA Department of Planning, RobertsDay, TPB, Greg Rowe and Associates, and the Yanchep Beach Joint Venture.

Activities
1. Work Placement – Students are required to develop a set of employment-related resources including CVs, Letter of Introduction, etc. in order to gain a placement in a private, public or not-for-profit planning organisation for a minimum of one day. Students then ‘shadow’ the planning professional throughout their working day and are included in a variety of activities including office meetings, plan production, development applications, meetings with stake-holders, etc. Students may be highly involved in the planning activities undertaken, such as strategic plan production, assessing development applications, or may be more ‘hands-off’ watching the process involved. However, students are required to make substantial contributions to the planning activities involved even when a ‘hands-off’ approach is taken i.e. students are asked to contribute their thoughts and ideas to the discussion. Whilst the minimum requirement is a one-day placement, most students forged a successful working relationship and continued in the workplace throughout semester. In some cases this work experience has developed into ongoing, paid employment.
2. Employment resources – One of the aims of the unit is to make students aware of the requirements of the modern workplace and produce a set of resources that will help them become more employable and enter the career path of their choice. The students should enter the workforce with a more realistic understanding of the workplace, what being a ‘professional planner’ means, and with a greater understanding of the interpersonal skills required for success in the workplace. Thus the unit coordinator works with the students to develop their CV, supporting materials, including letters of introduction, addressing job selection criteria, appropriate workplace behaviour and dress codes in order to facilitate their entry into the workplace.
3. Presentation – Each student is required to give a 10-minute presentation highlighting the activities undertaken during their placement and reflecting on the experiences involved. Presentation also involves the production of either a poster and/or a video. Thus, public speaking, and producing relevant materials for a presentation involving students, ECU staff and planning professionals are required components of the assessment regime. Planning professionals are invited to the presentations and asked for confidential feedback about their students and their own experiences of hosting the students. The presentation is sponsored by Yanchep Beach Joint Venture and prizes are awarded to the students voted as providing the best presentation and the best poster or video.
4. Reflection - Students produce a reflective journal focusing on their experiences in the workplace and showing how theory gained in class has been applied in the workplace.

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Student Feedback

Students recognised the value of work-integrated learning and felt that it enhanced the overall learning experience. All students recognised the value of work-integrated learning which gave them the opportunity of applying knowledge and theory gained in the classroom to real-world planning activities. Students recognised that a foundation of knowledge and theory is essential but a work placement can bring the subject to life in ways that a lecture or studio-based class may not. ‘Practical work is far better for learning than any study I’ve done. It’s made me very confident in approaching organisations and producing professional CVs and letter-writing. Instead of just theory, work experience actually put this practice to work.’

Students were initially overwhelmed by the complexity of planning practice, working in multi-disciplinary teams, and the levels of responsibility and understanding they were expected to demonstrate. Students were placed in a range of workplaces including State and Local government planning departments and private practice. The number of employees ranged from one to dozens and students had very different experiences as a result. Some students took a very active role in the smaller workplaces and provided significant input to development plans and applications. Students who were more self-confident, willing to contribute to group meetings and had more life experience, recorded more benefits from the placements. However, some students who initially were lacking in confidence and motivation, and found the experience overwhelming and intimidating, stated that they had developed a range of skills which had improved their self-confidence and employability.

Employers were generous in their support of the programme and willing to provide appropriate feedback to students and the unit coordinator. Employers were willing to give generous support in hosting ECU planning students in order to fulfill the requirements of the unit. A number acknowledged the resource and time implications of hosting a student and that more advanced warning would be advantageous given potential budgetary implications. ‘Great that students undertake real work experience and practice. Great networking and looks cool on resume’. Most industry participants had a positive experience with their student and were supportive of hosting others in future.

Students believed that they were better prepared to enter the workplace though the development of interpersonal skills. All students acknowledged the benefits of applying planning knowledge gained in the classroom to real-world applications. However, the development of interpersonal skills and networking opportunities were stressed as highly important by students and employers. The development of the CV, strategies for responding to job selection criteria, and appropriate workplace behaviour was noted by many respondents. One graduate who had volunteered to host a student stated ‘This unit got me my current job. Well done’.

Assessment

- Portfolio: compares the best theoretical views with student views on planning practice – 50%
- Presentation to students, employers and invited ECU staff: Presentation can be in a Powerpoint, Video or Poster format and also includes a 1000 word report outlining the approach taken to gain a placement, CV, correspondence with ‘employer’ etc. - 25%
- Personal reflection: A 1000 word report reflecting on the personal and professional experience of the ‘day in the life of a planner’ – 25%

Ideas for further enhancing the experience

Students stated that this unit brought together most aspects of their four-year degree, both theory and practice. Suggested improvements include:

- Increase the length of the placement to at least three days and potentially one week
- Have a range of potential placements organised before the start of semester
- More help and guidance with cover letters, CVs, workplace behaviour
- Be more explicit about what is required in the reflective journal
- Need to develop an incentive for some employers to become involved in the placement as time and resource commitments can be substantial.

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Case Study 16: Planning Practicum
By Johanna Rosier – Semester 2, 2012 – University of the Sunshine Coast
Student Cohort: Fourth Year Undergraduates (18), Semester 2, 2012

Context/purpose
This case study relates to a fourth and final year course in which students are placed in planning organisations in which staff commit to a mentoring program, supporting the students while they work for a period of 4 weeks (160 hours). Mentors receive guidance about their roles. Before the placement, students complete a 2-day block course and consider what issues they need to think about while on placement. These issues are then reconsidered in post-placement sessions in which students share their experiences and reflection with each other. The course builds student’s skills as a reflective practitioner in the planning discipline and familiarise them with workplace practices.

Experiential Learning Principles

Purposeful and Practice-theory dialectic
The practicum’s purpose is to expose Final Year students to a real world office experience. This course is the pinnacle of the experiences offered in the BRUP planning program.

Student-centred
Students develop their own criteria to reflect on practice experienced in the practicum.

Application of theory/classroom knowledge
Students relate their reflective criteria back to planning theory studies (role of the planner) in third year and professional practice in fourth year first semester.

Real world
Students work with a mentor in a planning practitioner’s office for four weeks. “Shadowing” the planner and conversations enable the student to experience a range of work and reflect on possible futures in practice.

Guided practice
Role of the lecturer is to support the development of criteria for reflection (Assessment 1) and to support the writing of the reflective journal as required – varies between individuals.

Reflection
Students control reflection on their individual experiences. The lecturer checks to determine that criteria do reflect ideas about the role of planners portrayed in third and fourth year courses.

Evaluation
Reflective journal assessment, individual student survey, student focus group to share experiences, interviews with planning mentors

Community-University Partnership
Partnerships with the PIA Sunshine Coast Branch, UDIA and the Sunshine Coast Regional Council are needed to provide practicum places each year. UDIA provides a scholarship.

Activities
Each activity relates to an assessment task.
1) In the Pre-Placement workshop, students:
   a. Receive lectures from three guest practitioners (strategic planning, development assessment and a consultancy about the nature of planning offices, ethical practice (PIA and Workplace ethics), and planning a career.
   b. Review and critique learning journals from previous students – development of reflective criteria and writing up day to day reflections.
   c. Work in groups to develop and test reflective criteria contributing to the completion of Assessment Task One – development of an individual set of reflective criteria; the lens through which individual students reflect on their experience.
   d. Individual practitioners who supervise students receive a list of ideas to guide possible student activities and risk assessment analysis of the workplace.

2) Completion of Assessment Task One (reflective criteria and analysis of the institutional context for the workplace in which each student will complete the practicum).

3) The Practicum (4 weeks) during which students maintain a journal reflecting on their experience (Assessment Task Two) (See student Feedback).

4) Post-Practicum workshop (Assessment task Three) in which students present highlights of their experience Students also complete a survey to provide feedback about their experience and make suggestions for improving the course.

5) Post practicum – planning mentors are interviewed to assess student performance and fit into the office, ability to perform tasks allocated and whether there are areas in which the BRUP program could improve student knowledge and skills.
Student Feedback

Students completed a survey about the learning experience after they had completed their four week practicum and before the feedback session (Assessment Task Three). The feedback shows that while their experiences varied considerably across organisations, students overwhelmingly agree that the practicum was the most interesting and challenging experience in their degree. Almost all students admire the planners who mentor them, especially in terms of their knowledge and their relationships with clients/applicants and others.

In 2012 the two significant changes were changes to the written evaluation by students, widening of groups in which work experience could be gained, and interviews with all planning mentors. Both changes improved the quality of student reflection about their experiences because they had forms to guide their reflection and were given notice about the post placement employer interview before they went out into planning offices.

Students working in Council offices expressed surprise at the number of meetings planners attend and the degree to which they need to be able to make quick decisions

• “I am primary contact officer for area of work on the Coast. Trying to please Minister’s office, community and other stakeholders—time management is a huge problem. Relationships to other offices is huge now—practice—find your own way and I attend a lot of meetings. Need guts to make a call on something when you don’t have enough information”.

Students observed how their mentors managed community relations, especially where the planner has not formal authority

• “I was working with a community planner, who was working on an advocacy project. She used informal power and her personal influence very effectively in achieving project outcomes—important because she had no formal authority such as a planning scheme or Council decision behind her. She also managed group discussions (framing for good), preparing groups beforehand and ensuring the conversations remained neutral in discussing potentially conflicting issues”.

Employers also gave strong feedback about students

• Employers generally believed that all students fitted into the office environment well. Three employers found it difficult to identify what students knew about the Development Assessment process. While only one employer suggested a program change to increase recreation planning, a number of employers noted that all students required more training once they were placed in an office, what ever education they have received. Three employers offered to support BRUP students seeking to do research projects and other group projects in the program.

Students believe they were well prepared to go into planning offices on a practicum

• In the student focus group (Group of 18) feedback, students agreed they were well prepared to go out into planning offices—only three students felt they were unprepared—main reason was that it was three years since they had completed Planning Law course, and they were concerned that they were not up-to-date with current changes to planning legislation. This was not a problem once they were in their offices. Students overwhelming believe this was the best experience of their degree.

Resources


Ideas to further enhance the experience

• Increase the diversity of organisations in which students may complete a practicum, for example more non-governmental organisations. Invite a NGO representative to talk to students in pre-practicum block course.
For creating sustainable regions and rural futures are a diversity of challenges and opportunities facing rural regional and international case studies that demonstrate sustainability. The course includes the role of institutions in rural and regional areas and their needs for a sustainable future. It also examines the interplay of social, environmental and economic processes that underpin rural and regional environments. The course follows a systems approach, examining the interplay of social, environmental and economic processes that underpin rural and regional areas and their needs for a sustainable future. It also includes the role of institutions in rural and regional sustainability. The course uses examples from local regional and international case studies that demonstrate a diversity of challenges and opportunities facing rural and regional areas. Finally key concepts and strategies for creating sustainable regions and rural futures are explored.

Experiential Learning Principles

**Purposeful** - Explanation of the purpose of these activities within the overall course context is given to the student before an activity begins and when it finishes.

**Student-centred** - The aim of these EL activities is to assist students apply theoretic concepts to contemporary issues through the development of skills, such as critical thinking and analysis, problem-solving, team work and oral communication. The lecturer respects the students ‘self-directive potential’ by the lecturer (Andresen, Boud & Cohen 1995: 227).

**Practice-theory Dialectic** - The activities draw on students’ existing understanding and extend it beyond the classroom.

**Real world** - These activities draw students into contemporary issues facing rural and regionally-based people. They challenge students to provide professional solutions depending on their areas of expertise ‘in the making’.

**Guided practice** - The role of the lecturer is to support the students through this development process over the duration of the course. The lecturer facilitates learning from the activities and continual reinforces their application week by week.

**Reflection** - Students are encouraged to reflect on each activity through prompts provided by the lecturer. Reflection includes critical thinking about their performance and how they might apply skills and knowledge to other situations.

**Evaluation** - These activities feed example scenarios into the students’ in-class exam and provide stimulus from topic selection and analysis in their major report.

**Community-uni partnership** - Students are exposed to community life through the story-telling and small group work. Guest presenters share their professional experience with the students.

**Activities**

1. **Story-telling** - Using narrative pedagogy the students listen to ‘real-world’ stories of how rural and regional people or places coped with recent challenges. There is space for a dialogue between teacher/students and student/student. The teacher prompts areas of discussion through asking questions and opportunity for students to think through other ways they would address issues if they were professionals or active citizens in the same position.

2. **Small Group Work** (Weeks 6 & 11) - The first activity involves students as part of a consultation process during the writing of a government policy. The teacher explains the purpose of the activities and provides background information on its relevance to the topic at hand. The students work in small groups to critique the suggested strategy and discuss potentially other options that may be more suitable. One student then delivers the group’s findings to the rest of the class. Other group members can also contribute extra information if needed. Class discussion ensues for a few minutes after each group shares outcomes.

The second small group activity involves students addressing the relationship between social, economic and environmental sustainability and innovate strategies they can think of that would improve the future sustainability of rural and regional spaces. This exercise builds on the semester’s work and provides clarity for students in thinking and writing about their final major report.

3. **Guest Presenters** (Weeks 8 & 10) - Two practitioners share their experience with the students, providing insights from their particular career focus. The main aim is to provide a practitioner point of view on the topics from the course and allow students to ask questions and reflect on the presentations at the following tutorial.

**Assessment**

**Mid-semester in-class exam (30%)** based on the theoretical concepts introduced in Weeks 2-6 lectures and includes application of these concepts to ‘real life’ scenarios. Students have a week to prepare their answers.

**Tutorial portfolio (20%) and participation (10%).** - From the course readings each week students discuss the set questions within small groups. After each tutorial each student select one reading only and write a page summary response, including a reflection on what they have learnt out of the discussion. Each week’s entry contributes to an overall journal collection submitted in two stages: Weeks 2-3 and Weeks 4-12.

**Major report (40%)** – Each student selects a rural or regional area of their choice and evaluates how triple-bottom-line sustainability issues impact that area. Human service student select a specific issues and evaluate how policy, research and professional practice impact the issue. They are also required to write a response plan.
Student Feedback
In Week 12 of the course students completed a survey about the impact of these experiential learning activities. Twenty students responded. The table below outlines the survey questions and a sample of quotations from respondents.

### Story-telling activities

**In what ways does listening to the experiences of real places and people help your learning?**
- That the theories actually prove to be right in reality and what rural life is actually like.
- It links learning to the real world making the learning relevant and therefore more engaging.
- Application of theoretical knowledge. One person can make a difference.
- Provides ‘real life’ scenarios to analyse and interpret.
- The theory becomes a reality. Also, very inspirational to learn sustainability isn’t just a theory, but actually happens.

### Small group work

**What did you understand as the purpose of using these small groups? Did these activities help you transition theory into practice?**
- Listening and considering other perspectives. Loved it.
- Learning to problem solve and analyses by working together to come up with different solutions from varied individual experiences.
- Many peoples’ ideas collected and discussed together scaffolds the learning of all of the people in that group.
- Gave me a view of the bigger picture and justification of the theory and real life concepts.

### Guest presentations

**What do you understand is the purpose of a guest lecture as part of the course? In what ways did the content of the guest lectures link to any prior knowledge you had on the topic?**
- It provides a contextual link between theory and practice.
- To deliver and encourage broader perspectives on associated issues, to answer questions that arise from the lectures, to simulate students to consider asking questions.
- It makes the course content more tangible to hear about its actual application in the real world.
- It linked with what was being taught in class beforehand.

### Ideas to further enhance the experience

Using a variety of contexts worked well to reinforce the learning outcomes over an extended time and with different emphasis. The majority of students understood the how the activities connected theory to practice and exemplified the complexity of current issues around sustainability. In the future I would structure additionally time for reflection immediately after the activity in order to allow students opportunity for immediacy.

### Resources
Appendix G: Independent Evaluation

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Experiential learning in planning education: Resources and tools for good practice – Independent evaluator’s report

I am pleased to provide this evaluation report in relation to the project Experiential learning in planning education. My comments outlined below are based on the material contained in the draft final report and observations during a meeting and briefing with the project team in September 2013.

Overall, experiential learning opportunities are increasingly regarded to be important to a well-rounded tertiary education but they have particular resonance for professionally oriented programs such as planning. As the authors for this project make clear, even though many forms of experiential learning are already employed in planning education, there is a need to inform these efforts and promote more systematic and rigorous approaches to their design.

Benefits to teaching and student learning

There are a number of distinct contributions to pedagogy arising from this project. The research base for the project includes a comprehensive review of the literature surrounding experiential learning theory and practice, and applies this to the discipline of urban and regional planning, making this wider work accessible for planning educators. The literature review also outlines the case for conscious and systematic adoption of experiential learning approaches within university planning schools.

A second important benefit of this project for teaching is in the benchmarking of current experiential learning practices across all planning schools in Australia and New Zealand. This survey exercise provided an opportunity to both establish baseline data on current practices but also offered some insights as to the factors supporting or impeding these approaches, enabling the design of resource materials to be better targeted.

The experiential learning ideas and assessment resource materials and supporting case studies and online toolkit provide a basis for improving planning pedagogy in Australia and New Zealand. Given the ample evidence of the connections between experiential approaches and deeper understanding of a subject, the outcomes of this project will make a clear contribution to student learning in the partner institutions and more widely.
Uptake of the framework into learning institutions

The design of the project has focused on ensuring high potential for experiential learning approaches to be better incorporated within existing urban and regional planning programs at undergraduate and postgraduate levels.

This has been achieved through much work on testing the spectrum of approaches to experiential learning by the project team within their own institutions, as well as the variety of models and cases documented, ensuring that the material has a high likelihood of future uptake by participant universities and other institutions in Australia and New Zealand.

By developing the framework for experiential learning through an iterative analysis of current practice, the project team has ensured that their guidance and tools are highly relevant to existing approaches within planning schools. Another important attribute of the framework and resource materials developed is that they are designed to fit in a number of diverse program settings, from undergraduate programs with embedded work experience units through to postgraduate programs which might not necessarily mandate a professional placement but still need to offer experiential opportunities.

In my view this is an important strength of this project. In further extending this spectrum of approaches, perhaps some additional thought might be given to structuring opportunities for mature students already working within planning practice, to reflect on this practice as a core part of their studies.

Process of coordination across planning schools and progress by institutional partners

A particular feature of this project is the obvious care in designing and undertaking the research project across five Universities from four different state jurisdictions (Western Australia, Queensland, Victoria and Tasmania) and the national professional body, the Planning Institute of Australia. Coordination has occurred through regular meetings and workshops (2012, 2013) and through the use of an online platform for internal communication.

Revisions and modifications to the project approach and to the description of case studies and tool kits provide evidence of the efficacy of this iterative and collaborative approach.

Process and outcome of engagement with external stakeholders

Engagement with external stakeholders is particularly important in a project which emphasizes experiential learning through exposure to the profession and professional contexts. The key stakeholders for this project are the Planning Institute of Australia (PIA), members of the planning profession, and Australia and New Zealand planning schools and academics.
The project was designed to engage practitioner stakeholders at key stages in the process:

- Through presentations at the major PIA meetings (national congresses in 2013 and 2014)
- Exchange of papers through PIAs national and state education committees
- Regular engagement with Planning Advisory Committees within each of the planning schools.

Academic and planning school engagement occurred through presentations at the Australia New Zealand Association of Planning Schools (ANZAPS) conferences in 2012 and 2013, which generated considerable discussion. The online list server for planning academics has also been used to engage with planning schools and academics.

A key outcome of this engagement is a set of approaches and techniques for designing experiential learning which reflect stakeholder requirements and interests as well as those of universities and planning students. This is critical because quality experiential learning opportunities in planning education address a key concern of the planning industry overall and planning employers in particular – the need for graduates to be “workplace ready”.

At the same time, universities face a clear dilemma in delivering professionally oriented degrees and in meeting fundamental university criteria and standards for critical thinking and research. This has sometimes caused tension as universities seek to differentiate tertiary education from technical and workplace training. The project team clearly identified some of the consequential ambivalence about experiential learning which may pervade some planning programs. An important contribution of this project is in addressing these issues by establishing the rigorous continuum of experiential learning contexts (see Table 2.2) and showing how to ensure constructive alignment between experiential activities, intended learning outcomes, and assessment.

Unintended outcomes and lessons learned

One of the surprising findings of this project was the extent to which experiential learning opportunities are already embedded within Australian / New Zealand planning education. However, the early stages of this project established that these opportunities are rarely structured or systematic, and that more considered approaches to designing and assessing outcomes are needed. By providing this guidance, as well as a wider set of cases and tools for planning educators to draw upon, the project provides a basis for significantly expanding and improving approaches to experiential learning.

Usefulness of the toolkit

There are very few teaching resources for planning education that have been specifically designed with the Australian / New Zealand context in mind, therefore the online toolkit represents an extremely important resource.
Its value is not only in providing guidance on how to design a variety of experiential learning approaches, but in using real examples which have been tested and which can be emulated. In my view the toolkit is likely to have high take up both by new planning academics and by those required or interested in better incorporating experiential approaches within their courses. In this way, the toolkit provides a powerful basis for disseminating the findings of the project.

One of the important challenges for the project team will be ensuring ongoing development and updating of this important online resource.

In conclusion, I congratulate the project team and authors for their important contribution to teaching and learning within the context of Australia and New Zealand planning education. I am sure this is a resource that will be well used by planning educators and I suspect it will become an important reference for other disciplines as well.

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