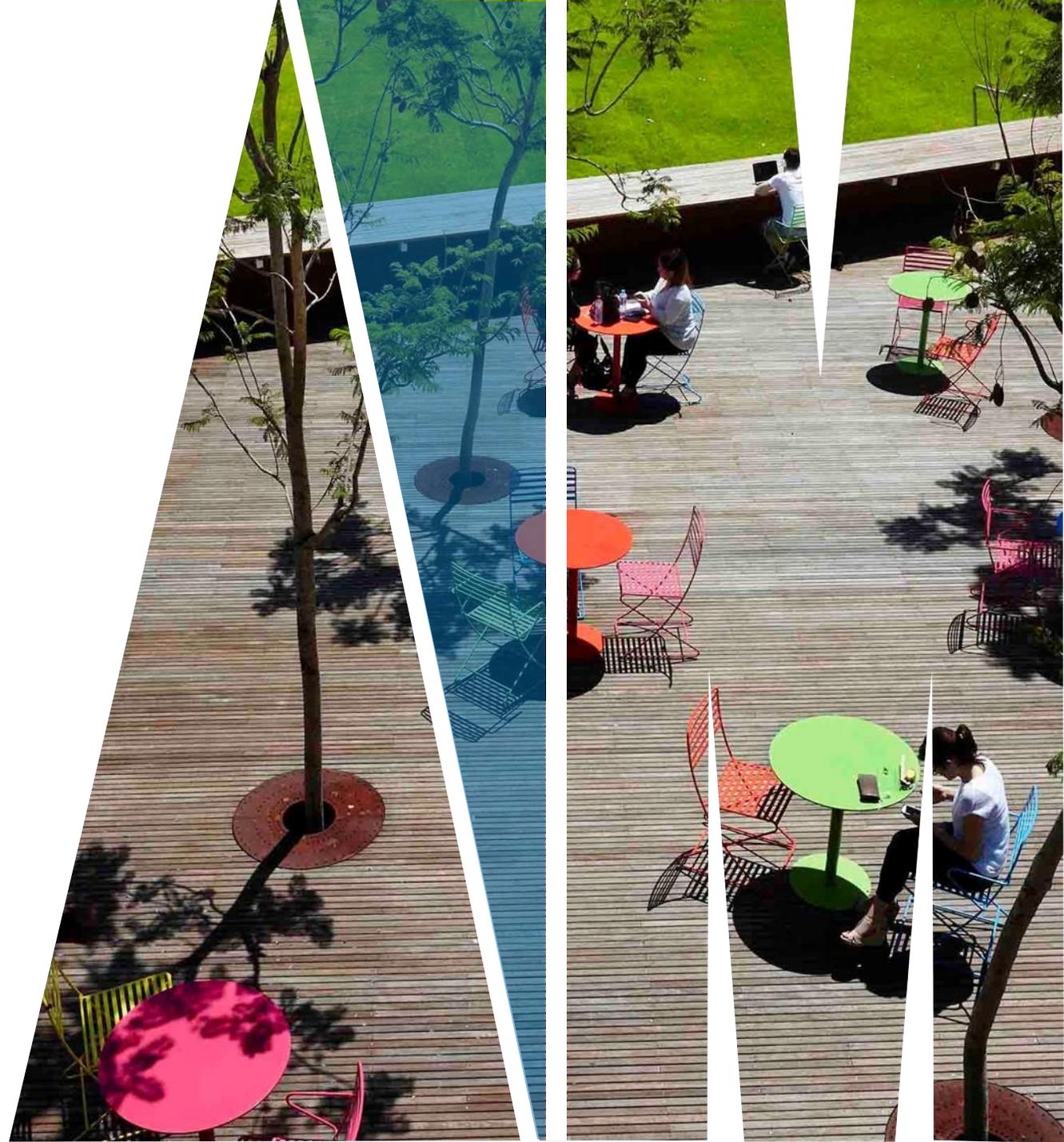


**Dr Louise Jenkins**

**Director Student  
Engagement**

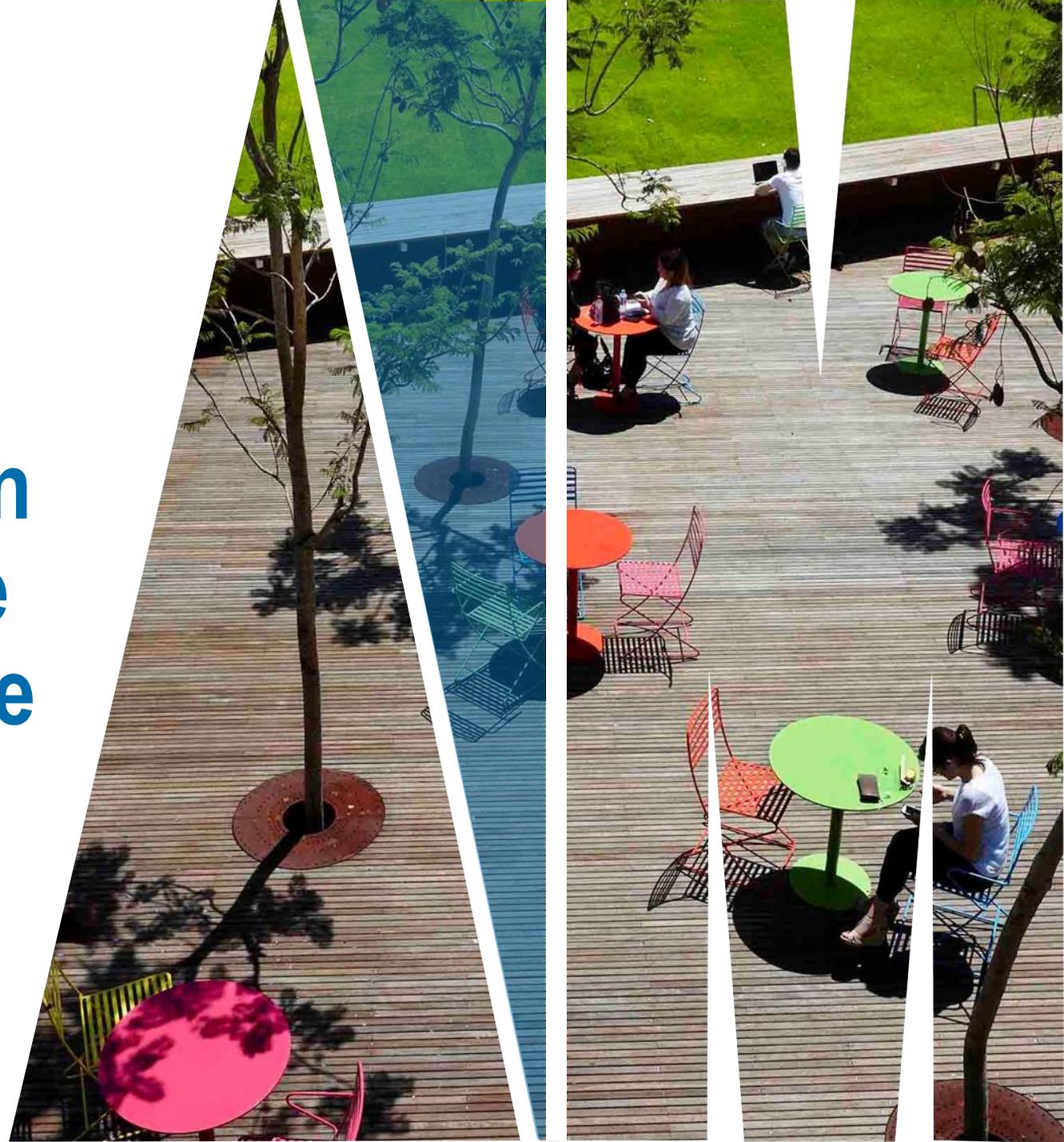
**Monash University  
Faculty of Education**





**MONASH**  
University

# Experiential learning in Initial Teacher Education courses: connecting the university learning to the professional space



# Context

- unpredictable unsettled global situation
- pandemic, wars...shift online learning
- universities-responsibility-**impactful learning experience** and to **engage students positively in their learning**
- gaining employment
- navigating career successfully

# Context

- education-crucial as we emerge from the pandemic and online learning
- students spend a lot of time in schools with **teachers**-belonging, comfort, certainty, positive future

# Context

- teachers are extremely important
- how can ITE educators provide this impactful educational experience which will engage ITE students in their learning
- prepare them appropriately for their teaching profession
- support recovery from global events
- impact students' learning in schools

# Experiential Learning

- experiential learning-provide an impactful response
- practical implementation of authentic and real-life teaching and learning experiences
- bring theory and practical together in a meaningful way-impact planning and pedagogy
  - developed throughout first half twentieth century
  - ideas-Dewey, Lewin, Piaget , Jung and Friere
  - centre of learning is the experience
  - student centred

# Experiential learning

experience is all that we have as human beings and is **fundamental to learning...the way we know something is true is that it comes back to us and proves true in our experience**

(Kolb, 2012, What is experiential Learning?, William James, philosopher and psychologist, Harvard)

experience guides **what** we learn and also indicates to us **when** we have learned something (Kolb, 2012)

immerses students in experiences-encourages reflection-students actively engage-  
manage own learning

**transformative**...encourage new knowledge, skills, competencies- that learning through theory or practice cannot achieve in isolation (Qualters, 2010).

# Elements of Experiential Learning

Two approaches-implementation EL will be discussed in this session

- fieldtrips/living lab(Professor Williams)
- integration of EL learning and assessment within classroom settings (Dr Jenkins work in Music Method class)
- Other...
- professional-based or work-based learning
- programs for studying overseas

# Context for Experiential Learning implementation

- Bachelor of Education (honours)/Master of Teaching
  - Music Method classes
  - aim-linking theory to practice-embedded in learning process
  
  - artistic student-led project-developing a musical production
  - no resources, no script, no music, no money
  - education theme-important educational issue
- authentic context  
student centred, decision making about own learning, take initiative, flexible, unpredictable

# Experiential Learning Cycles

- Kolb 1984
- Learning cycle
  
- Concrete experience
- Reflective observation
- Abstract conceptualisation
- Active experimentation

# Experiential Learning Stages: artistic project

- Stage 1
- the production work itself-music/composition, script, acting, singing, dancing, choreography, costumes, staging, marketing, rehearsal schedule (**concrete experience**)
- Stage 2
- Journals and online forum posts in response to questions (**reflective observation**)
- Stage 3
- Written piece-process and role, experiential learning, inclusive approaches to music education, real-life school situations/ context, Australian Professional Standards for Teaching (**abstract conceptualisation**)
- Stage 4
- Professional placement in schools to test learning (**active experimentation**)

# Two major outcomes from the EL process

- authenticity of the student-led artistic project
- team work, communication, process/planning, preparedness for teaching,
- **transferability of skills and understanding into an imagined or current school context: interview readiness and employability**

# Online Experiential Learning-pivot 1

- never met
- rapport
- trust
- collegiality

# On-campus to online-pivot 2

- unanticipated switch to online mid-semester
- already developed rapport and sense of belonging
- knew each other-less misinterpretation of others' behaviour

# Reinventing the EL project implementation

- re-thinking class time
- change to class structure and management
- break-out rooms
- outside of class time
- teacher trust
- time management-student led
- changed the skills required-technical skills
- changed the planning, development and implementation completely-new territory for everyone

# How Experiential Learning supported these pivots

- student centredness
- flexibility catered for different challenges
- unpredictability of EL, unpredictability of pandemic
- changed the skills required-technical skills
- teacher already managing change and unpredictability in EL

# Reinventing the EL project presentation

- individual videos on zoom
- separate singing tracks
- Brady Bunch set-up
- time delay
- instrumental performances-individual tracks
- choreography-plan and then separate implementation and filming
- Youtube Premiere
- pre-recorded

# Experiential Learning implementation

- numerous challenges which the participants had to overcome
- Maria learnt how to do the “backstage, onstage, set designs...behind the scenes”
- Toby found that the “sketching it out and trying to figure out the logistics of how it was all going to happen” was “really amazing”

# Connections to employability

- developed particular skills for the participants
- communication
- team-work
- persistence and commitment
- problem solving
- flexibility
- awareness of strengths and weaknesses
- willingness to help

# Connections to employability

- Naomi-interview panels were extremely interested in her leadership role in the musical-demonstrated ‘**leadership...motivation, team teaching**’. Naomi and Lucy had been joint producer/directors for the production so had essentially team taught. Lucy claimed that the team-teaching aspect provided evidence that she was capable of working effectively with other teachers, which was something the panels were looking for.
- Sandy-interview experience impacted by the experiential learning
- “**you...[are] able to say – look I actually did this thing...it’s practical evidence...I’ve already been there and done it and I understand it”**”

# Connecting theory to practical: authenticity

- online teaching-connections to their professional work
- music in schools
- flexibility
- responding to change and uncertainty
- connecting online-communication and developing relationships
- common goal
- leadership roles-teacher's hat
- replicated what they will experience in schools-uncertainty, online, disruption
- microcosm of wider social environment

## Impact and purpose: Professor Williams and Dr Jenkins

- Sandy ‘it wasn’t just a couple of people doing a group assignment...it was actually a whole class situation which is obviously something you would be dealing with in a school as a teacher” (Dr Jenkins’ project)
- ‘Creating a passion among our students for the living environment’ (Living Lab, Professor Williams)

# Looking forward...

- 'post'-pandemic experiential learning-student centred develops independence and confidence-crucial now
- theory and practical-cope with any situation, wider perspective and understanding
- impact on professional development and independent learning, flexibility, relevance, skills...we all have experience...as an educator leverage this for positive outcomes

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