

Mr Bernard Pirrie has worked with disengaged, socio-disadvantaged youth, predominantly those who have English as a second language, for the past twenty years. Bernard is studying a Bachelor of Social Work to formalise his face-to-face learning and to further develop his skills in order to contribute more in the policy and research areas of his chosen work with communities.

Ms Sarah Marshall was raised in Ballarat, Victoria but has spent most of her adult life in Melbourne. Sarah has always been interested in politics, social justice and the environment, some main themes she believes are important in a Social Worker's life. Sarah has come to the Masters of Social Work at RMIT University from a varied background. For the last three years Sarah has been a Student Rights Officer at the RMIT University Student Union (RUSU). She works for and with university students, empowering and assisting with a range of academic matters to ensure the process is fair and that policies are followed correctly.

Title: Scaffolding for inter-cultural learning: Reflections on the process and content of a preparation module for international student experiences.

Authors: Peter Jones, Simone Rowe

Abstract:

Continued interest in providing Australian social work students with international study opportunities has led to consideration of how best to prepare such students for these cross-cultural experiences. In this paper the authors reflect on the process involved in developing an online module focused on 'inter-cultural learning'. This module is one component of the preparation process for students from James Cook University travelling overseas on work-integrated learning (WIL) study trips. The module attempts to move beyond simple, practical, travel considerations and challenges students to engage with broader concepts and dynamics as part of their preparation. This 'critical' approach makes clear links between their travel preparation and key aspects of the social work curriculum in which they are currently engaged. The content of the module is outlined, including sections on culture; imperialism and cultural diversity; racism and privilege; critical reflection; and inter-cultural practice. The rationale for this content is discussed and plans for future evaluation of the module identified.

Biographies:

Mr Peter Jones is a Senior Lecturer in the Department of Social Work and Human Services at James Cook University. His primary teaching and research interests are in the areas of eco-social justice, social work education and transformative learning. He is actively involved in grass-roots environmental activism as well as developing approaches to social work curriculum which reflect a globally informed and ecologically literate approach to practice. His current research activities include an examination of environmental ethics in social work; the application of transformative learning theory in social work practice; and the internationalisation of social work education.

Ms Simone Rowe has a background in social work. She is a researcher at the Cairns Institute, and a graduate honours student in the School of Arts and Social Sciences, James Cook University, Australia. Her research interests include: Criminal justice social work, International social work, Indigenous knowledges and methodologies, and the development of eco-social models for social welfare practice in the field of criminal justice. She has researched and published on the theoretical and practice implications of integrating Indigenous methodologies in the disciplines of social work and criminology. Her current thesis explores the increasing criminalisation and incarceration of Indigenous women in Western settler societies through the development of Indigenous and Critical paradigmatic approaches to this phenomenon.

Title: Work Life Balance: Women striving for the impossible?

Authors: Sherin Paul, Debra Miles

Abstract:

This paper is the result of an international collaboration between two women who experience the difficult task of combining full time paid work, unpaid work at home and in the community, family and self-time. In sharing their experiences with each other the authors identified the ongoing difficulties that confront women employees in achieving a positive work/life balance in both Australia and India. In this paper the authors discuss the literature and research that documents the perplexing and complex nature of the concept of work-life balance, especially as it relates to the full and equitable work force participation of women. This paper will then examine the issues that arise from the literature in both India and Australia and argue that despite the differences in family structure and policy developments, women in both countries continue to face significant challenges and threats to wellbeing as they pursue the nebulous state of a work/life balance. The paper concludes with ideas for ways in which change might be realised.

Biographies:

Associate Professor Debra Miles has worked in the tertiary education sector in Australia since 1995, teaching in professional social work and women's studies courses at James Cook University in Queensland and at Charles Darwin University, in the Northern Territory. Her social work practice background includes work in child protection, the disability sector and women's services. She is currently the Deputy Head of the School of Arts and Social Sciences and the Convener of the Women's Studies Research Unit at James Cook University. Her teaching foci include human rights and social work practice. Debra's current research projects include internationalisation of social work education; women and leadership; and the experience of Indigenous students in social work education.

Ms Sherin Paul is a Lecturer in the Masters of Social Work (MSW) program at the De Paul institute of Science and Technology (DIST) in Kerala India.
