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Learning to learn: Empowering students to articulate the value of their HASS degree

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Learning to learn: Empowering students to articulate the value of their HASS degree

Abstract

In an uncertain labour market, the questions around the employability of graduate students take on a new urgency. Fears about the graduate market in the coming years are acute and are compounded by a sense that there is a large disconnect between a university education and what is expected in the workplace. Australian labour market trends clearly demonstrate that the skills most in demand by Australian graduate employers are precisely the transferrable skills which are honed by doing a HASS degree at the university. However, HASS academics do not usually talk about the skills and attributes students are gaining during their university studies and how this is useful in the workplace. Creating this awareness in both staff and students is immensely important for future graduates to survive and excel beyond university. Based on focus groups, interviews, and student-led projects over the last three years, this paper explores how to balance the need to engage with deep disciplinary knowledge with the understanding that this knowledge is only useful in the real world if accompanied by explicit skills. By using a case study, this paper showcases how to articulate skills and knowledge to HASS students to prepare for workforce. Furthermore, it focusses on how graduate attributes and learning outcomes can be connected from assessment tasks to classroom teaching.

Practitioner Notes

1. The HASS academics should more explicitly articulate the soft skills students usually attain through university HASS degree, volunteering or professional experience and broader life experience. It is time for us, the academics to demonstrate and articulate the valuable contribution our students are capable of making.
2. HASS should be more celebrated and should be included explicitly in the social discourse in order to change the quality of contemporary debate regarding the HASS disciplines.
3. This paper presents a case study of a Program which includes a specific workshop series entitled *Learning to Learn* which has been developed to address the perceived stigma reported by students by empowering them to articulate what transferrable skills are linked to discipline knowledge in the study of the humanities. This program is also designed to explore concepts of employability, transferable skills and a drive to excel in Arts education.
4. We take the view that Students' background and precious experience should be recognised and utilised to increase their learning potential and enrich the learning environment. This is something students often indicate is missing from regular teaching pedagogies used in classrooms settings. One of the major components of '*Learning to Learn*' is the personal SWOT (strengths vs weaknesses vs opportunities vs threats) analysis. Learners need to know themselves and their abilities 'as a learner'. This self-awareness is significant for further growth and development. This also lays a strong foundation for them to become lifelong learners.
5. This paper proposes **Four W Approach**, as a means of bringing the focus back to students and being curious about their experience and intentions. It asks very simple questions.

However, these questions start a robust and ongoing discussion around aspirations and achievements. These questions are fluid. Hence these can be used in different stages of student life to help students to connect their personal interests and objectives with their academic journey taken in the university and the professional trajectory beyond university.

Keywords

HASS degree, transferable skills

Introduction

Universities in Australia are required to develop a set of attributes that their graduates will gain upon completion of a degree. Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) degrees are generalist qualifications, and as such, have tended to focus on developing attributes such as critical thinking and communication skills (Giles & Drewes, 2002). A HASS education does not simply impart knowledge for future recitation, rather it focusses on preparing students to think, critique and persuade. It develops the skills to analyse and problem-solve. These skills are critically important as graduates will be required to navigate an increasingly complex world and labour market, where they must think for a living (Bennett, 2018). Despite the strong evidence of positive employment outcomes (QILT, 2021), the immense utilitarian benefits of HASS degrees are often understated or overlooked. Students have often told us that the idea of a “successful future” is commonly associated with greater income potential and better job opportunities which is again linked with more practical, more vocational degrees like Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics (STEM) or commerce. It is common to hear doubts about the worthiness, applicability and viability of HASS degrees. In the Australian context, the previous federal government’s decision to double the cost of HASS degrees in order to steer students to other disciplines is evidence that HASS degrees are devalued (Australian Government, 2022).

Many students who come to study HASS disciplines are aware that their degrees are likely not vocational. Yet they are cognisant of how the humanities encourages them to understand their own perceptions, communications and most importantly their aspirations for change. These are fundamental concepts and understandings about the “self”, and they are inherently useful in many different contexts. Through the study of different disciplines, students gain valuable skills that have current applications. History students can analyse complex texts and identify the most trustworthy sources. This, of course, is more useful than ever in the era of ‘fake news’. Philosophy students navigate complex ethical questions that have increasing application in the commercial world. Language students become proficient not only in their chosen languages, but also gain skills in cross cultural communication, which is highly sought-after in a world of multinational organisations.

However, students tell us that we academics in HASS do not usually talk about the applicability of the knowledge students are gaining during their university studies (though we all are aware that questions around employability are critically important to them). Here, students often ask us about the “transferable skills” they gain through their study in HASS. Transferable skills (often also called “soft skills”) are important to students as they consider what steps they might take after university. They are often described as an essential element in developing graduates’ flexibility, and improving their employability prospects (Succi & Canovi 2019). Transferable skills are the collection of inter and intrapersonal abilities that “facilitate mastered performance in particular contexts” (Hurrell, 2009, p. 397), those that “include communication, team-work, problem-solving, critical and innovative thinking, creativity, self-confidence, ethical understanding, capacity of lifelong learning, the ability to cope with uncertainty, as well as the willingness to accept responsibility” (Succi & Canovi, 2019).

Indeed, higher education institutions have become more focussed on how to develop transferable skills in students over recent years (Yan et al., 2019). This does not detract in any way from the intrinsic value of higher education. Nor does it suggest that employability is the end goal of every degree. However, students report to us that they are anxious about entering the labour market, and would like to feel more supported to do so by us, the teaching staff at universities.

There are a few recurring themes students have highlighted to us over the years (from 2018 – 2021) as their motivation for choosing HASS disciplines. These include their inquisitiveness and interest about the world and their place in it; their determination to explore different languages and cultures; their motivation for philosophical, political, and ethical inquest; aspects like intellectual freedom, critical thinking, intercultural communication and understanding, respecting and valuing different ideas and thoughts. Students proudly recognise that their degree is about what it means to be human. They acknowledge that a HASS education prepares them to be an active and engaged member of their community, at a local, national and international level. Hence, students often express that the study of HASS should be more celebrated and should be included explicitly in the social discourse in order to change the quality of contemporary debate regarding the HASS disciplines.

Background and Motivations for Learning to Learn

Our work in the scholarship of teaching and learning and our deep interest in student voice and agency have motivated us to lead a conversation around employability, lifelong learning, transferable skills and how to articulate these skills for our students since 2018. In our conversations with students over the last few years, we have noticed a few themes arising consistently:

- Students are aware of a stigma around their arts degrees
- Students struggle to articulate what they are learning at university to outsiders
- Students feel under-appreciated in the classroom.

These themes might appear to be unrelated at first glance, but we were struck by how often these ideas were interlinked in students' minds. Students were very clear in voicing their concern about the social stigma around HASS degrees, and were actively seeking a way to address this. At the same time, they told us that they needed help to answer the question 'So what are you going to do with your Arts degree?', and that they did not feel valued as individual learners in the classroom. This paper presents a case study of a Program which includes a specific workshop series entitled *Learning to Learn*.

The *Learning to Learn* program has been developed to address the perceived stigma reported by students by empowering them to articulate what transferrable skills are linked to discipline knowledge in the study of the humanities. In this way, we have sought to balance their own pride in their disciplines and the public stigma, and also to help them understand the true value of their humanities degrees and how these prepare them for the workforce. We believe through targeted interventions, it is possible to teach students to articulate their discipline-specific knowledge and transferrable skills, and how these might be useful to them beyond their degree. It is also essential to prompt teaching staff to recognise the critical requirement to articulate the skills and knowledge we are developing in the humanities and how these are useful beyond university.

Our student focussed work over the last three years has prompted us to:

- consider several simple strategies for providing Arts students with scaffolded employment-like tasks that encourage the active development of transferrable skills.
- discuss how we can connect graduate attributes and learning outcomes from assessments to our classroom teaching.
- start a pilot program to embed transferrable skills into the curriculum.

As a result, we have designed, developed and started delivering the workshop series within the *Learning to Learn* program. This program is designed to explore concepts of employability,

transferable skills and a drive to excel in Arts education. It helps students to understand the need create a balance between deep disciplinary knowledge and explicit skills. The goal of the workshops is to prepare our students to be “Future-ready HASS Graduates”. As student focussed HASS academics, we wanted to address all aspects above while prioritising the needs of students and preparing students for the future in our pedagogies and teaching practices. We are mindful of that our students need to know themselves deeply to understand the way people function in both academic and professional worlds and how they want to approach their own individual futures. We also acknowledge that the variety of learning experiences (both academic and social) provided as a part of the university experience is a major factor in developing well-rounded students as the future human capital (Succi & Canovi, 2019).

Program Design

The *Learning to Learn* program is the direct result of numerous engagements with students, starting with the faculty student voice project in 2019. Students who participated were vocal about their anxieties around entering the labour market. They told us they did not feel well prepared to describe what they were learning in their degrees, and that they often had to justify their choice of degree to friends and family. From these early interactions with students, we began to see that this was an area worth exploring in order to meet their needs.

In designing the workshop series within this program, we sought to move away from the language of deficit and frustration sometimes used by the students, and towards a more positive framework that encouraged students to engage with their studies from a position of empowerment. We therefore emphasised the importance of students knowing themselves and working from a position of strength in describing their studies and hopes and plans for the future. This required us to design activities that focussed on teaching students to articulate their attributes and challenges, and on ways of helping student see learning as a lifelong endeavour.

Learning experiences in tertiary settings are not limited to a student’s academic endeavours. They also involve social interaction and psychological development. The variety of learning experiences available as a part of the university experience is a major factor in developing well-rounded students as the future human capital. Various studies (Bennett, 2007; Boyer, 1990; Cheng, 2004) have shown the importance of prioritising the learning needs and goals of students by making the teaching contents and contexts relevant to them. Relating content with students’ lives is crucial. If they cannot connect the content and context with their personal experience, they are less likely to see the value of it and may feel less engaged.

The workshop series within the *Learning to Learn* program aims to help our students to understand themselves as a learner. Self-realisation around learning abilities and personal SWOT analysis are at the core of this workshop series. This allows students to explore the qualities and traits that contribute to their uniqueness as a learner, and also to begin to articulate the skills they are developing within their HASS degrees. Through comprehensive discussions around transferable skills, this workshop also provides practical strategies to prepare students for professional life. In the workshops, we use assessment case studies and hands on activities for the participants to recognise and appreciate the skills and knowledge they are learning within their HASS degrees. These activities also aim to help them master how to articulate and apply those skills at work.

The following diagram shows the objectives of *Learning to Learn* in a nutshell. It illustrates that there are two major components in terms of celebrating and valuing HASS degree. They are:

- a) identifying, highlighting and articulating transferable skills embedded in the HASS degree and
- b) clarifying and explaining the fact that deep disciplinary knowledge is most useful in the real world when it is accompanied by explicit skills.

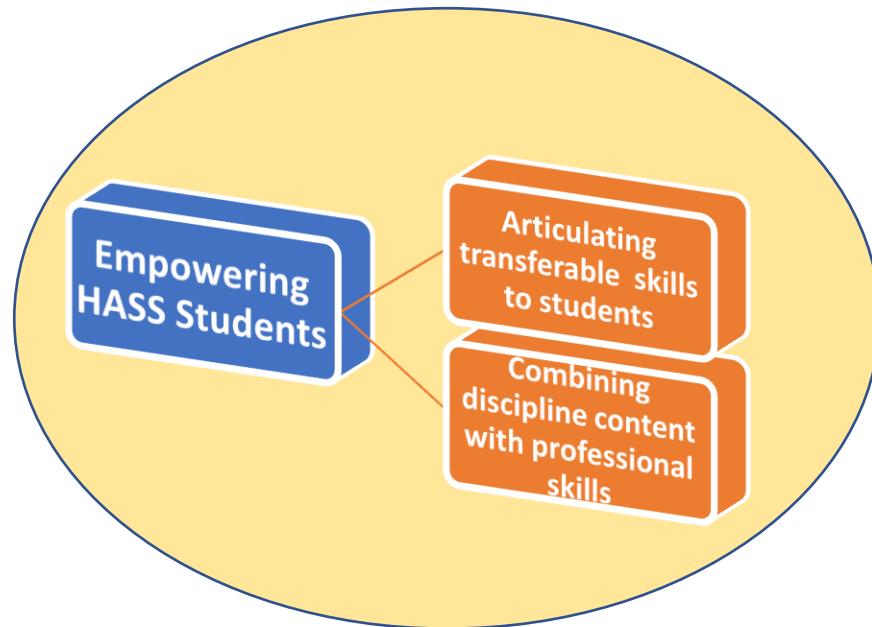


Diagram 1: Objectives of *Learning to Learn* Workshop

We take the view that students' background and previous experience should be recognised and utilised to increase their learning potential and enrich the learning environment. This is something students often indicate is missing from regular teaching pedagogies used in classrooms settings. One of the major components of *Learning to Learn* is the personal SWOT (strengths vs weaknesses vs opportunities vs threats) analysis. Learners need to know themselves and their abilities 'as a learner'. This self-awareness is significant for further growth and development. This also lays a strong foundation for them to become lifelong learners.



Diagram 2: Personal SWOT Analysis Diagram

Pilot implementation and Workshop Delivery

We were inspired to help students articulate their skills and knowledge, and we started with four focus groups, conducted in July, August and September 2020. These focus groups took place virtually (over Zoom), with between four and six participants each time. The participants were a mix of undergraduate, graduate, domestic and international students. From the focus groups, five students came forward to participate in longer semi-structured interviews, and were generous with their time and insights into the student experience. We collected student comments throughout the workshops and asked for their feedback upon completion through a post-workshop survey.

The data analysis approach we followed was Fairclough's (1992) three dimensions of discourse analysis: description, interpretation and explanation. At the descriptive level, insights from critical linguistics and textual analysis guided us in systematically describing features of student comments and discussion that were later to be interpreted and explained. At the interpretation level, we examined "discursive practice" with attention to contents, subjects, relations, and connections (Fairclough, 1992, p. 78). Here, we closely examined the topics that students raised frequently, the way students described their motivations for enrolling in a HASS program, and the ways they reflected on their understanding of what their degree prepared them to do. Within the final level of analysis, we placed the language and interpretations in context with wider political, social, historical, and cultural discourses. These wider discourses may come from "the immediate conditions of the situational context and the more remote conditions of institutions and social structures" (Fairclough, 1989, p. 26).

Workshop Outcomes and Discussion

The workshops were enthusiastically received, and students participated with evident interest and enjoyment. Some student comments are included below:

This workshop was really valuable. I was really happy as I was part of the initial focus groups Nira and Elizabeth ran couple of years back and we discussed our concerns. It's great to see that the things me and my peers mentioned have been addressed in here. This is really important as this explicitly tells us what skills we have developed or have within us. I find it so useful that I asked my friends to attend. (student comment)

It is useful here to return to the original three concerns raised by students that motivated us to design the *Learning to Learn* program:

- Students are aware of a stigma around their arts degrees
- Students struggle to articulate what they are learning at university to outsiders.
- Students feel under-appreciated in the classroom.

These three concerns were major themes that emerged from the workshops.

Addressing Stigma

Many people were shocked to hear that I intended to study arts—and were especially disappointed to learn that I hoped to undertake a major in philosophy. This attitude of devaluing arts education is clearly present within our society. Throughout high school, students passionate about reading, writing and communication are ridiculed for their lack of 'practical' or 'vocational' skills, and discouraged from pursuing degrees in arts or humanities. Students who exceed in maths tests are praised for their genius, but this acclaim rarely extends to those who achieve outstanding scores in English. (student comment)

There seems to be a great deal of public discourse discussing the stigma attached to the study of Humanities (blog posts, newspaper articles, opinion pieces), however a review of the literature found a lack of systematic research into whether this is the case. In particular, students referenced recent federal government policy around the study of humanities and how this has contributed to their degrees feeling devalued, and misunderstood. Although many of the students agreed that there is a societal stigma around the choice to study arts, they remain passionate about their disciplines. Many students in the workshop made comments about justifying their choice to family and friends, and being the butt of jokes about where their degree would lead them.

Often our family and friends ask us what's the point of doing an Arts degree. They often think there is no serious career pathway. They think doing an Arts is more like fun. 'Arts students have a lot of free time' – that's the common idea of many I know. (student comment)

We always need to convince others and even sometimes ourselves that our Arts degree is useful. It's very hard to convince that how we can make important our contributions to the society or what's the guarantee we'll get good jobs because I don't know what to say. I know people from different countries have different opinions and different expectations from the graduate. But from my perspective, just knowing the Arts degree is prestigious or it can take us anywhere is not enough to convince my Chinese family and friends to pay for Arts degree. (student comment)

Despite the perceived stigma, the HASS disciplines are fundamental components of every comprehensive national university system around the globe. In Victoria in 2020, the Bachelor of Arts was the most desirable course for students graduating from year 12 (VTAC application statistics 2020/2021). The Australian Academy of the Humanities (2019) shows that Humanities, Arts and Social Sciences (HASS) disciplines account for 59 per cent of all undergraduate and postgraduate course enrolments across Australia. Students remain eager to enrol in Arts degrees. The high numbers of tertiary enrolments in HASS programs across Australian universities also suggests that many members of the Australian tertiary-educated workforce hold HASS degrees.

Ambiguity and obscurity around arts degrees should be clarified and discussed during transition from school to university to beyond. Otherwise, the stigma around Arts degree will never go away. (student comment)

In terms of student enrolments, student satisfaction, research, development and innovation, and overall production of "future ready" graduates HASS disciplines make major contributions. The purpose of the *Learning to Learn* program is to help students to articulate the benefits of their study. Many students felt more empowered after attending the workshops, and less concerned about these perceived stigmas because they felt more equipped to explain their skills and knowledge to someone outside their discipline; both in terms of their future employment prospects and to family and friends.

I learned how to identify my strengths and about my weaknesses. I also learned what I need to improve going forward. It also helped me a lot to identify what could be an obstacle to my success. I learned to verbalise what I know the best, how I am capable of managing a project: How I would go about it, breaking down a task into its elements, extracting meaning from it, satisfying requirements of assignment task. And that was really helpful. It made me a whole lot more confident. (student comment)

What I haven't learnt in last few years, I learnt in this workshop. Most importantly I know about myself more as a learner. I will be graduating in few months. This workshop was an eye opener for me and my friends. It made me really confident and now if anybody asks me what my Arts degree has given me, I can answer their questions very confidently. Wish I attended such workshop in my earlier days in the degree. (student comment)

Students also mentioned how *Learning to Learn* has encouraged them to look at their assessment tasks differently, with more invested interest; and strengthen their desire to keep learning for the purpose of self-development. Research shows that exposure to the study of liberal arts and humanities develops higher levels of positive personal qualities, such as empathy, tolerance for ambiguity, emotional intelligence and self-efficacy (Mangione et. al., 2018).

Addressing Articulating HASS Skills

Another key theme was the need to connect HASS discipline knowledge with pathways after university.

There should be a clear and explicit discussion and embedded teaching pedagogy regarding how to apply arts/humanities skills beyond university. This should be designed to build connections between the Learning objectives and employable skills. (student comment)

In response, *Learning to Learn* introduces and discusses transferable skills in detail and how to identify transferable skills embedded in HASS degrees. It also connects graduate attributes and learning outcomes from the assignments/assessments used in different HASS subjects through the examination of assessment case studies from various disciplines. It fosters a robust discussion around the skills HASS students ought to be able to develop within disciplinary subject curriculum contents. Students have the opportunity to take part in meaningful conversation which produces valuable ideas and recommendations regarding developing personal attributes within curriculum and preparing for beyond the degree.

In Higher Education, there has been much discussion around producing work-ready graduates over the last decade. There are a number of ways that this is seen to happen, including the use of experiential learning, work placements, and other industry exposure. In this context, transferrable skills are widely seen as vital, due to rapid changes in the labour market (OECD, 2016; Succi and Canovi, 2019; Universities UK, 2018). Indeed, in Australia the skills that graduate employees have looked for consistently over the last decade are often transferrable skills. These skills, such as creativity, interpersonal understanding and emotional intelligence support the study of any discipline, and are widely transferrable between workplaces. These skills are integral to the study of the humanities (O'Mahony et al., 2019).

HASS degrees are not traditionally vocational, and do not have strong links with industry compared with other fields of study, like health, and education. Research suggests that finding ways to encourage relevant and authentic work experience may help improve the transitions young people make from education to work. This is particularly important for areas of study where there are traditionally lower instances of work integrated learning, such as those in the general sciences, humanities, and management and commerce areas of study' (Hurley et. al., 2021). Transferrable skills ought to go hand in hand with discipline knowledge in HASS degrees. However, it is evident that some students struggle to identify their skills, and we in the higher education institutes do not do enough to educate them to identify their skills and articulate those to prospective employers. This goes some way to explaining why the misconception around HASS skills and employability remains predominant in the social discourse.

The above is an explanation at the macro level of the gap between HASS studies and the skills and knowledge required in the workforce. However, the students were explicitly concerned with the micro level experience. They told us they were unsure about how to explain what they have learnt, and how this might be applicable in the workforce. *Learning to Learn* provides an opportunity for students to examine their discipline knowledge and consider how they articulate this knowledge, and pair it with relevant transferrable skills.

Addressing Valuing Students

A key theme that students raised in the focus groups and interviews prior to designing the workshop was the need to acknowledge them as individual learners:

Asking students to bring their experiences and background into what they are doing is really crucial and that makes a huge difference. (student comment)

Background experience is more an asset than a burden and gives freedom and courage to make an input. (student comment)

While it is important to acknowledge the background experiences each student brings into the classroom, it is also very important to ask and discuss what expectations they have in mind. *'Learning to Learn'* explores these issues for students to see the value of their personal attributes and experiences in their growth and advancement as learners. *'Learning to Learn'* also delves into what skills individual student brings in classroom and connects with what they want to build on or achieve to further their attributes.

Coming from a nontraditional education background it is important to have various forms of learning in the classroom. (student Comment)

I worked and went to TAFE for a while before coming to uni, so I bring a real eagerness for collaboration and teamwork. So I always want the scope to use these skills in the classroom. (student Comment)

Students who come to study HASS are diverse in terms of their backgrounds, experiences and interests. Content and pedagogies in HASS education are not static, in the same way that the social, cultural, philosophical and ethical insights and interpretations of the students are dynamic and distinct from each other. This is something to be harnessed and celebrated.

Diversity in students' learning styles and ways of class engagements is not always acknowledged in classroom. Didactic way of teaching is really outdated. One size fits all approach in teaching is not helpful for us, the students. Acknowledging diversity in learners and learning styles is crucial for student engagement. (student comment)

This student comment is a reminder of how important it is to recognise different learning styles and various approaches to learning in our diverse classrooms. We should explicitly acknowledge that not all the students are expected to build the same skills and attributes. The transferable skills associated with HASS degrees are wide-ranging, just as the disciplines are. Depending on personal, psychological, social, cultural and ethical understanding and interests, different students will build distinctive transferable skills and will also interpret and harness them differently.

Like any other study streams, students in HASS come from diverse backgrounds, bringing diverse experiences and ideas. Celebrating individuality helps strengthen student engagement and enhance student motivation and it allows the teacher to help students make connections between their own experience and the content. Students reported feeling motivated and inspired to learn when they are invited to pursue their specific interests. Students want to be valued as an individual, and when they feel they are accepted as a part of academic community that contributes directly to their sense of belonging. Boyer (1990) clearly states that students do not like the feeling of being "a number in a

book” (p. 48). They need to feel their teachers are interested in them, the institutions are eager to listen to them and they want their individual values and differences to be respected and recognised.

Celebrating the individuality of each learner and celebrating diversity in the classroom also gives students confidence in their identities, and helps them to understand the value of their diverse identities. This can also empower them to use their uniqueness and distinctiveness to their advantage when entering the job market, particularly considering that HASS jobs depend heavily on the interpersonal skills of employees.

Going Forward

There is an increasingly important need to continue learning and acquire necessary skills to adapt to the ever-changing world. Therefore, it is important that students realise the importance of being a lifelong learner and are prepared to keep learning in and beyond formal educational settings. In the 21st century, education should no longer be just about "knowing," rather it should focus on learning how to learn. During the COVID pandemic, it has been evident that innovation has not just meant the technical or technological innovation, or it does not serve the whole purpose on its own. It is important to acknowledge how critical, philosophical, humanistic and ethics-based skills are instrumental in the development and management of technical skills and Artificial Intelligence (AI) solutions. And that reiterates the fact that HASS degrees can bring creativity, innovation and empathy to the current challenging global situation. We translate these deep human understandings as ‘soft skills’ in the workplace. They are in high demand, at a time when some hard skills are becoming less valuable due to the increasing capacity of technology to complete many technical tasks.

The Higher Education landscape has changed rapidly over the last few years. Now knowing how to learn is critically important, because knowledge and the means of acquiring it are changing so rapidly. If students are trained to be a lifelong learner, they can adapt and thrive in a world where change is the only constant. It is a perfect opportunity to acknowledge that we need a more fluid approach to learning as a continuum. Learning is a means to progress towards profound self-development. Researchers like Bowden, Tickle and Naumann (2021), Crabtree (2020), O’Gorman (2020) reiterate the fact that students learn effectively when they are intrinsically driven and derive their reward from a sense of achievement. And this is most possible when their learning environment considers the social, emotional and cognitive needs of the learner.

To keep this conversation alive, and enhance student engagement, this workshop series has integrated student voice and their valuable recommendations through its activities and teaching resources. This can be regarded as a response to the gaps identified by students to ensure effective student engagement and agency. The following recommendations are the direct result of student feedback from the Learning to Learn Program. These students belong to different schools, are at different levels in their tertiary education, and are diverse in their language, social and cultural backgrounds, gender and age.

Recommendations from students:

- Students’ experience and backgrounds need to be recognized and utilized to increase their potential.
- Content and skills-based discussion should be integrated.

- There should be a clear and explicit discussion and embedded teaching pedagogy regarding how to apply arts/humanities skills beyond university. This should build connection between the Learning objectives and employability.
- An embedded and integrated approach should be taken to develop effective and pragmatic triangular connection between students, academics and industry.
- Engaging alumni and industry to clarify the expectations around transferable skills and to discuss how graduate attributes and soft skills can be articulated.
- There should be a very explicit discussion explaining what skills/knowledge the subject covers, and why and how this is useful for life beyond university for every subject embedded in the teaching plan.
- Skills development in programs should be intentional. Pragmatic discussion and explanations around learning objectives, learning outcomes and assessment rubrics would assist students to see the transferable skills they are acquiring, alongside their discipline knowledge.
- There should be more embedded and tailored Enhancement Program teaching and discussing Arts/Humanities skills which are transferable.

These recommendations show clearly the need for buy in from academic staff members in order to make changes in the classroom. We do, however, acknowledge the significant limitations of generalising the recommendations above, as these have arisen from our single institution study. Our intention now is to take what we have learnt from the workshops, and further the conversation with our colleagues to empower them to make these changes in a way that does not sacrifice the discipline knowledge which is so vital in HASS.

Any pedagogical interventions we make should have at their heart, a respect for the concerns of students. Our students have been clear with us about their concerns and anxieties, and we are thankful for their time and efforts to explain where we can step up to address these concerns. In empowering the students to know themselves and their capacity, we can start them on the journey of being lifelong learners. In giving them the tools to articulate their skills and knowledge, we can address the stigma around HASS studies, and help them to access the labour market with confidence. We owe our students the best possible launch from university, particularly in these challenging times. We have been impressed by how insightful and thoughtful our students are, which motivates us to serve them as best we can.

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