



## **Dawn Bennett, Michelle Johnston, Bonita Mason and Chris Thomson**

### **Abstract**

Service learning is a form of work-integrated learning (WIL) wherein the emphasis for student learning shifts from professional practice to students' understanding of social justice issues and their sense of citizenship. This paper explores the role of arts-based service learning in exposing such intercultural voices and changing student perceptions. The reciprocal service-learning projects described here enabled university screen arts and journalism students to form relationships of trust with Aboriginal community groups in the city of Perth, Western Australia, which is located in Whadjuk Noongar country. These are described as reciprocal because successful service learning requires a project to be conceived in a way that delivers benefits to all participants. Within these contexts, notions of charity and the unequal power relationships fostered by 'charity' are eschewed and replaced by an equal partnership between community and service provider, and by the potential for mutual capacity building and mutual benefit. This presentation reports on an action research cyclic methodology where participants reflected both on and in action to develop a conceptual understanding of Australia's First Peoples. This involved critical reflection within the action research cycle and took multiple forms including written reflections, interviews, creative journals and film.

### **Bio**

Presenting author Dawn Bennett is John Curtin Distinguished Professor and Director of the Creative Workforce Initiative with Curtin University in Australia. Her research focus is enacting and enabling employability within higher education learning and teaching and she won an OLT citation for this work in 2015. This incorporates research on employability, identity development, graduate transition and graduate work, retaining a special interest on careers in the creative industries. A violist and a Principal Fellow of the Higher Education Academy, Dawn serves numerous editorial boards and she convenes the Australian Learning and Teaching Fellows' network. She serves on the board of directors for the International Society for Music Education and peak body Music Australia and as a commissioner with the ISME Commission for Education of the Professional Musician, and she co-chairs the Curtin Academy.