

A student's reflection on completing the Good Life Working with Disability MOOC

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With a busy schedule and an abundance of apparently amazing learning opportunities all vying for my attention and professional development dollar it can be really difficult deciding upon a course of action, and so more often than I'd like to admit the chosen course is inaction. I entertain the idea of expensive events and even consider postgraduate coursework, but the reality is I don't have the time or the budget.

As a professional, working strategically to improve access and participation for people with disability in the Australian context, I really do value the chance for continual learning to develop and deepen my understanding of disability. I am fortunate to get a great deal of exposure to informal learning opportunities through my work, so when I am looking for more formal learning, what I really want is credibility, currency, quality, cost effectiveness and flexibility. Online courses can but often don't meet my needs, and I have been known to pick them up and put them back down again when they fail to engage me as a learner. The Massive Open Online Course (MOOC) Disability and a Good Life: Working with Disability is entirely different, it met all my needs and so much more.

The 'Disability and a Good Life: Working with Disability' course is freely offered over six weeks by the University of NSW on the FutureLearn platform. It is interesting and engaging, offering Australian and global perspectives on disability which are grounded in social, political and legislative context, defined and interpreted for modern application and implementation. The course adheres to universal design principles, is well-paced and well organised

into a logical sequence which scaffolds and builds upon learning each week, and with educators and mentors available to provide support and guidance, and actively involved in discussions, ensures learners of all abilities globally can participate. The ability to interact and converse with such a diversity of learners enhances the learning experience, offers deeper understandings of how disability and associated issues of access, inclusion, support and care are culturally understood and constructed, and challenges the learner to critically reflect on their own knowledge and perspectives.

Professional and lived experience expertise are balanced and blended throughout the course, offering invaluable insights and ideas about the importance of decision-making and independence, contribution, and access. This in particular caused me to reflect upon what it is like for people with intellectual disability to move out of home, have relationships and get a job – all the 'usual' stuff associated with transition to adulthood. Capacity, choice and rights were thoroughly explored through themes such as sexuality, legal representation and living in one's own home, and excellent case studies challenged societal norms around what it means to contribute and highlighted many valuable non-economic means.

Throughout the course I felt like people with disability were sharing their stories and themselves with me, and with a good deal of common sense, generosity and passion have brought me along on an important journey of discovery about exactly how much I do not know. ●