

# student reflection on Disability and a Good Life: Thinking Through Disability and Disability and a Good Life: Working with Disability MOOC

by the University of New South Wales

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**S**tudent reflection on Disability and a Good Life: Thinking Through Disability and Disability and a Good Life: Working with Disability by the University of New South Wales

I have undertaken the UNSW Disability and a Good Life MOOCs, once as a student and three times as a mentor for both the courses. I have disabilities, both cognitive and physical and have found the courses to incorporate universal design as much as possible throughout the content.

As a student I found the course to be engaging and thought-provoking. I particularly enjoyed listening to the video guest presenters in the course, all of whom had different kinds of impairments, talking about their lives and their reflections on the topics each week. The learner guide for the courses Mel, made reflections that really resonated with me, and from other student's comments, they also appreciated her honest and candid examples. Mel was able to make the content of the courses applicable to her own life and the lives of other people with disabilities she was friends with or had worked with. This gave the content that we were exploring a relevance to our own lives as people with disabilities but also for those undertaking the course who did not have disabilities a chance to reflect on what it could mean for people living those experiences.

The University of New South Wales has created content which is engaging, informative and accessible to a wide variety of students, some of whom have disabilities and others who may have English as a second language. They have been able to achieve

this by providing content in a variety of formats: MP3/audio, transcripts and videos meaning that the course content is accessible and able to be engaged with in a manner that works best for the individual student.

Disability rights is a big and complex topic, which for people who may not have engaged with it before, could feel intimidating, however, the course structure enables these important ideas to be broken down and unpacked for most students in a manner which has transformed thinking and perceptions. Unfortunately, due to the nature of this course dealing with complex, abstract ideas it may not be fully accessible to some people with intellectual disabilities.

The disability community is diverse, in terms of the types of impairments that we live with, our access requirements, and our level of engagement with the social model of disability and disability rights. These courses centre the voices of people with disabilities throughout, one of the guest presenters identified as having an intellectual disability, so together these presenters were able to highlight the different perspectives and experiences people with varying impairments have. This highlights the diversity of disability and also in doing so makes it accessible and engaging to people who may experience a variety of impairments similar to the presenters.

I discovered a course which models universal design and a commitment to challenging attitudes and promoting equality of people with disabilities. ●