

[Narelle] Hello and welcome

to another episode of the Digital Access Show. Today's guest is a friend of mine, Brett O'Connor. Brett is the founder of the

Inception Network. Now, Brett's got a lot of great knowledge to impart today because of the work that he's done over the last 20-30 years. And welcome Brett. Thank

you for being on our show. [Brett] Thanks, Narelle.

It's good to see you. I know that's

probably ironic. This is where I've been,

y'know, running businesses. I had my first business when

I was 21, which was a cafe in a food court at

Westfield in Sydney. I've got into

franchising and all of this sort of stuff,

so I've always been in training and business consulting for like

the last 30 years. But probably in the last 10

years I've actually gone into the formal system and

actually developing training content, doing diploma,

you know, back in the old VET FEE-HELP days

and all of this sort of stuff. Got into compliance

with that as well. And then Inception was

actually started up to start up businesses, but

also to create training content, for simulated

businesses as well. And what I started up is

local home and garden repairs. We did such a good job

of creating a simulated business that it's

now turned into - we've gone out into the

marketplace and local governments and all of this sort

of stuff and said, do you realize this would be

the perfect thing to serve as the MyCare Home Network network and older homeowners? This is where it comes into, well, how have I been able to do that? Because I've been teaching these formal qualifications, not just to, you know, people that are in business or they've got the skills already. We're talking about, I create courses, not for everyone but for everyone else. So people with a disability, people that, you know, don't fit into the course, people that haven't studied for 20, 30 years, all of this sort of thing, over 60s. Teach them how to do Facebook management. So what I say is when you create courses for people that don't fit into a box, you come to the realisation that there is no box except for what we make of it. And this is where it comes into what I'm finding and why we're here today, is we're talking about that... Um, what reasonable adjustments RTOs can make in the qualification system. But because the technology is freely available and all the accessibility technology already exists, there's absolutely no reason why all of the students, they can't implement it into their training and assessment school resources because it doesn't cost the students anything extra. [Brett] To actually use it. [Narelle] And that's it. [Narelle] That's it Brett. I mean, it is such an easy thing to do. And what Brett's talking about

with reasonable adjustment, as he says, RTOs, which is a registered training organizations here in Australia. So TAFE Queensland is a private RTO. Um, universities. I think they're in it. Any one where there's some formal training is registered as an RTO here in Australia. So Brett, when you say reasonable adjustments, what type of things would come in as a reasonable adjustment? [Brett] Well, in the, if you look up the, you know, the training and assessment training package, which the Certificate IV in Training and Assessment which we're in the process of changing over to a new one. It's just been reviewed. Most people and including yourself are doing the one that was developed in 2016. The new one which comes in in December, you can no longer deliver the old one anymore. It's got a lot of these digital units and all this sort of thing and it incorporates that into the training. Now, when they release these training products, is what they call it and it is a product, not a service. Under the ACCC, it meets all the same rules as a product. They release a companion volume which describes and defines terms like reasonable adjustment. So a reasonable adjustment is as stated in the Disability Discrimination Act. What a business, what's reasonable for a business to do to overcome a particular disability. Now, it's a recognised

disability which could be things like autism and ADHD and stuff like that. [Narelle] Mental health isn't considered? [Brett] That's right. Anxiety is considered a recognised disability. Burnout is another one, recognised by the World Health Organization. So all of these things, you know, it's like - fear can be something which prevents you from doing something but it can also save your life. It depends on whether you're triggered or you've glimmered, whether you've got a negative or positive contingency plan which is a different part of the brain and the fight, flight or freeze response. And this is where it comes into - With a reasonable adjustment, it's for people that can't just change the way they think. They don't have the neuroplasticity. So this is where a reasonable adjustment is only for something which is basically based on a condition that can't be improved through training. If you go blind, then you shouldn't have to change the content or have a special cohort for that. Because if they're signing people up and they're blind, with a disability, which is a recognised disability, and there's accessibility checkers and all this sort of thing, they have, under the ACCC, they sign you up on the standards for RTO so that you have to

develop training content that's suitable for that training cohort. So they then have to make the adjustment and they can't say it's financial hardship because if they say that, yes, we're accessible and you find out that it's not, then you can actually, or they don't make what's called a reasonable adjustment or they say, oh no, we can't do that because of financial hardship. Basically anything that is paid for under the NDIS isn't - You can't use the rule, 'oh it's financial hardship so we can't do it.' You just have to not accept that person into your course if you're not set up to accommodate that disability. [Narelle] Doesn't that become discrimination? [Brett] Um, It's not discrimination. It's... if you don't have a lift installed in your building, then you can't employ someone with a wheelchair. [Narelle] Got it, understand, yes. [Brett] That's when it's an unreasonable adjustment to say, 'I want to work for you, you need to put in a lift,' because that causes financial hardship on the business. So that's a reason why, when you go to the Disability Discrimination Commission or the people that look out. [Narelle] Human Rights Commission, yep. [Brett] They're going to say, well, this is going to cause financial hardship. So no, we're not going to tell them to give you a job because they can't install a lift. [Narelle] Yes. [Brett] This is where a lot of the things with the

NDIS is coming in, but it just comes down to - again, for everything that is a good thing, there's always someone who's going to rort the system and there's going to be problems with that. And the training is no different. [Narelle] So what in the training industry, say, okay, I've signed up for the TIE course, what is a reasonable adjustment for me? What would you consider? For those who don't know,

I actually have a severe vision impairment. So, yeah.

[Brett] Yeah. [Brett] So, well, this is where you've got a severe vision impairment but you're not totally blind from birth, which is why you've been able to, your trainers have done a wonderful job and been able to get you through all but I think two of the units now? You're up to doing-

[Narelle] I'm on the last unit now. [Brett] So you're up to doing the practical assessment, but this is where it comes into, how are you going to do that? And how are they going to assess you? Um, is the issue now. So maybe they've come up against the wall where it's just physically the trainers can't get you through to the course without some sort of action. Which - TAFE has come back to you or your RTO has

come back to you. [Narelle] Yep. [Brett] And the directors have spoken to you and they were like, yeah, no, we want to fix this. [Narelle] Yeah. [Brett] But at the same time too, this is what you do. So they should be paying you. If you've identified this problem and they can't fix it themselves, they should be paying you or paying another professional to fix this problem. And this is because, like I said, you're a consumer and you have consumer rights, even though it's a fee-free course. The government is still paying them to deliver this course to you. So it's not a free course, but even if an RTO was doing free training with you and it was a defective product, you would still have the consumer rights to get them to repair that defective product. [Narelle] They should all be accessible from the start. Shouldn't they? [Brett] Well, there's a Standard, I think it's Standard 5.1, which says that before enrolment or training commences, then students have to be properly informed as to what they need to do or what the RTO can do and the capabilities of the RTO and what they need to do to get through. There's also another one that says that a trainer or an assessor or anyone that works for the RTO, including marketing people, can't tell you that you can get through a course in a manner that's not stated in what they call their training and

assessment strategy. Which is Standard 1.1 to 1.3, which outlines all of the resources and that that they have and all this sort of thing. And it would say in there that your, that their LMS is accessible for blind people. So this is where it comes into- but TAFE is employing consultants that are telling them that, yes, it's accessible. But it's not until a blind person actually comes through and someone from any cohort, someone with a disability or something like that, comes through. This is when the RTO finds out that whether or not they can actually, you know, live up to the standards and it's not like it's a matter of calling their bluff. It's just they genuinely believe that they can get you through. But this is where it comes into, it depends on the capabilities of the trainers more so than the RTO themselves. [Narelle] That people test, they've got a screen reader, they know how to use it. But because you've got sight, there's that unconscious- and it is unconscious. They really do mean well, but there's an unconscious, 'oh yeah, okay, we know it's over there. So we just go tab-tab, we gotta go back one, yeah, we can get to it.' And it's not that they mean anything wrong, they don't. The problem is they're not living it. [Brett] And I have because I've been doing SEO for years, but I'm building basic websites without the plug-ins. And this is where I've gone back

to web developers and I've said, 'so why aren't you with, why aren't you turning

this stuff on?' And they're like,

'oh, we can do that. It's just that customers don't request it.' Well, yeah, this is it.

And they say that there's not... It's not that they don't

have the money to do it. They don't have the money to change it because they've already spent

the money on this stuff. A lot of the stuff

that they recommend that is a reasonable adjustment. The Disability Discrimination

Act, I think it's section six, doesn't say what a reasonable adjustment is. It just says what it's not. [Narelle] Yeah. [Brett] Okay, so why doesn't

it do that because technology has changed so much that it's no longer-

a lot of the stuff that gets suggested

to me by RTOs. It's not... It's- it's already there. It's

already in the package. We should already be doing it. But because there's a two year, teach out period for the Cert IV for TA and Qualifications, this is where, this was

written two years ago. A lot of the

technology when this qualification

came into effect... [Narelle] It's gone. [Brett] It's- we've got new generations of technology now, particularly after COVID

and this sort of stuff. [Narelle] And this

is it. People don't know what they don't know. And I think that's what

we're saying really, isn't it? Because, you know, if

you've not been trained in it... I mean, to my

mind, universities, RTOs, TAFEs, education systems, this should be

part of - the digital accessibility should be part of work development training, IT training, business training, anything where there's digital content, they should - they

should be trained in what good document structure is, what... Good digital accessibility is, and really, how simple it is. Because the moment they've done that... [Brett] Yep. They are, but it's at Cert III level, which, you know, this is where you can't get that student loan. There's, you know, people want to go for the diploma. [Narelle] Yeah! [Brett] They miss the stuff at Cert III and Cert IV. It's not - Bloom's taxonomy isn't a logical progression. It's using different thinking. [Narelle] Yeah. [Brett] And then you get into uni and it's all about analysis, synthesis and creation. So that's what they call higher education because of the higher level of thinking. But, you can go to uni and learn all this sort of stuff. But you've still got to come down to VET and do a VET course to learn how to apply it. Because VET's all about - basically stops about application thinking. Because it's - what is the application of this theory in the workplace? And this is what we're struggling with at the moment. But if the trainers and assessors don't know this stuff... So if your trainers and assessors don't know, you know, they don't know what they don't know. They're trusting the people that are developing this course. [Narelle] That's it. That's it exactly. [Brett] We're going to get what we've always got. [Narelle] Yeah. That's it. So Brett, what... I always ask for a couple of

takeaways from our guests. What takeaways can you give to the trainers, to the students? [Brett] I would

say to the students, there's two things that stick out for me in regards to instructional design. And it's not the

80s system or it's not preferential

learning styles. It's been called the 70-20-10 principle, which

is 10% of your knowledge comes through learning. A formal learning.

[Narelle] Yeah. [Brett] Okay. 20% of your knowledge comes from coaching and mentoring. [Narelle] Yep. [Brett] 70% of your knowledge

comes from actually doing it. So as you get the confidence to do it and you go there. That's when you're going to

get the 70% of your learning. So don't expect

you're going to get everything that you

need to know to do it. You're not going to go out- You're not going to learn 70% of your knowledge

until you go out there and don't be afraid to fail. You're not failing. The only way to truly

fail is to do nothing. And then the other

one is the format instructional design model,

which, like Simon Sinek, starts with why,

but then it's what to do. And this is also how business consultants put value on the IP. When you know why you want to do it, it's relevant to you. Then you work out what to do. And when it's

relevant to you, then you work out, well,

how can I do it? And that's when they

go into a training course. Then it comes down to, well, what if it doesn't work for me? Then how do I adapt it? Okay, which is the... What I've just described

there is the... Unit of competency. The outline is the why.

[Narelle] Yes. [Brett] The what-you-do

is in the descriptor. And the performance criteria. Okay?

[Narelle] Mm. [Brett] How you do it is the

knowledge evidence, and the what-if is the performance evidence. What if, you know, what if you get given this situation? What are you going to do? And that's what the summative assessment is based on. These are the training models that L&D and businesses use for their own staff. So, you know, it's the education sector needs to learn from them. But the hardest people in the world to educate are educators. And it's not until it makes it relevant to them. And unfortunately, AI is not going to take your job. People that use AI will. But that's the state that we're at with the education system. They can't prevent it. And a lot of the accessibility tools are being used by AI. But we still need to teach people the basics of accessibility and what the problems are and why they do it, because... Now they're not going to know how to make it accessible. So they can't adapt their system that they paid to get set up if they don't make it accessible or they don't know how to make it accessible in the first place. So it's going to cost them money. [Narelle] That's it. Brett, I can't thank you enough for coming on today. I really appreciate it and I hope that people listening have found it useful. How can people get in contact with you, Brett? Well, I'd say jump on the website inception.net.au. So that's for the Inception Network Australia. [gestures] Oh sorry, this side. Because we don't have time to go back to basics in training. I want to know what you can do for me or how we can work together. And I can find someone

else to do whatever you can't do

because our networks, you know, 25,000 businesses just with the Business and Jobs Expos alone. So yeah. [Narelle] Yeah.Thanks

again, Brett. So this is Brett O'Connor

from the Inception Network. And... as you've

obviously realized, Brett's been in the education, training, and VET industry

for many years. He's got the knowledge. And he's a good guy to talk to. So this is - I'm not sure what episode of the

Digital Access Show. I've lost count. We just keep churning them out. And if you like what

we're doing, please like, subscribe, share, review. Let people know about it. Because seriously, it really

comes down to accessibility. Plus usability. So accessibility

of the information. Plus usability of

the tools that the information's on,

whether it's a website or a digital

document or whatever, but they need to

be user friendly. Plus understanding

and understanding it's the language you use, the level of language,

the type of words. All of them

together are going to give you better communication. So thanks again and

we'll see you next time.