

STUDENT SUCCESS

C O N F E R E N C E

29 JUNE - 1 JULY 2026
NOVOTEL SUNSHINE COAST RESORT

PROCEEDINGS

Write your name here:

WELCOME

We are excited to welcome you to the 2026 Student Success Conference, which is being held for the third consecutive year as a collaboration between the Students Transitions Achievement Retention & Success (STARS) team and key sector stakeholders from the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) and the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia (NAEEA).

On behalf of those of us who live and work across Australia's great geographical diversity, we acknowledge that we are on the lands of the oldest living cultures in the world. In the spirit of reconciliation, we pay our respects to the original custodians and First Nations peoples of Australia and to their Elders past, present and future. Coming together in-person on the beautiful lands of the Gubbi Gubbi (Kabi Kabi) and Jinibara peoples, we acknowledge the traditional owners of these lands and pay our respects to the Gubbi Gubbi and Jinibara Elders and people. We extend that respect to all First Nations people attending the Conference. We affirm our commitment to walking with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and advocating for policy and practice that focuses on the rights of Indigenous staff and students to participate in an inclusive, tertiary education environment that honours Indigenous ways of knowing being and doing.

We very much appreciate the opportunity to bring colleagues together at this Conference. Our delegates include Deputy and Pro Vice-Chancellors, senior experienced academic and professional staff and early career individuals and researchers, all of whom are contributing in different ways to enhancing students learning experiences and outcomes. We are proud that our delegates represent the broad range of staff with a balance between 'professional' and 'academic' staff of roughly 55:45. We warmly welcome returning delegates and offer a special welcome to new delegates joining us for the first time this year – you are among friends.

The conference is not-for-profit and supports the Diamond open access fee-free Student Success Journal which publishes one issue annually associated with the Conference. Any proceeds retained after the Conference and Journal costs are met, are reinvested in the Conference and used to secure the Conference for the following year.

It is our sincere hope that all delegates experience the 2026 Student Success Conference as a welcoming, respectful and collegial gathering of staff, students and community members. As always, the Conference will provide us all with wonderful opportunities to learn together and share our diverse expertise, experiences and knowledge – all grounded and guided by our collective commitment to, and passion for, enhancing the student experience and student learning success. Our aim is to create a conference environment in which we can inspire and motivate each other to remain student-centred in all our endeavours and to foster a positive professional identity as professionals in the higher education sector internationally.

The Student Success Conference (2024-2026) is built on the strong foundations of the STARS Conference (2015-2023) and prior to that, the International First Year in Higher Education (FYHE) Conference (1995-2014). In total, more than 26 events have been held primarily focused on higher education in Aotearoa and Australia. While various colleagues have contributed for many years, the expert organisation of this Conference can be directly attributed to our wonderful Event Director – Jason Thomas, who has been an instrumental member of the Conference team since 2007.

Across these years, many devoted colleagues have been active champions for student success in the Australasian higher education sector. We are pleased to recognise exemplary contributions through the annual STARS Fellow Award. Our inaugural STARS Fellows – were awarded in 2015 setting the standard, to the excellent Professor Sally Kift and Professor Ron Oliver and our Fellows now include Mary Kelly AM (2017), Dr Linda Leach (2018), Nick Zepke (2018), Professor Kerri-Lee Krause (2019), Dr Kathy Egea (2021), Professor Sarah O'Shea (2022), Dr Cathy Stone (2023), Professor Ella Kahu (2024) and Professor Emerita Tracey Bunda AM (2025). Fellows are selected by the Fellows with the announcement made at the Conference.

The overarching STARS Conference themes remain as cornerstones of the Student Success Conference collaboration: **Students, Transitions, Achievement, Retention, and Success**. These themes provide the framework for our annual gatherings and guide our analysis of tertiary curriculum, programs, practices and culture. The themes are at the centre of our consideration of how our higher education institutions in Australasia and beyond are creating environments that enable students, in all their diversity, to realise their potential through post-secondary education.

As always, the Conference Program is exciting and dynamic with some refreshed and new items this year. Registration opens on Sunday 28 June at 2pm and is accompanied by a concurrent Native Tea Making Workshop. At 4pm 'When the STARS Collide' is an informal networking opportunity open to all. We encourage first time or individual attendees to come and meet the Conference Team, Fellows and many returning delegates. On Monday 29 June, the sessions previously known as Networks are reborn as Constellation Sessions – "individuals forming a bigger picture together". Seven Constellation Sessions of 90 minutes will be held across the morning. The Conference will officially open after a short lunch break. We are delighted and honoured to welcome Professor Kerri-Lee Krause – Chief Commissioner, TEQSA and STARS Fellow who will provide the opening keynote – *Student success in ruptured times: Where to now?* Professor Krause's keynote will be followed by the announcement of the 2026 STARS Fellow. Parallel sessions include refereed papers, Emerging Initiatives and Good Practice Reports. Parallel sessions 01-04 commence at 2.45 and conclude at 5.15. Day 1 concludes with the Conference Welcome Reception sponsored by our esteemed Platinum Sponsor – Studiosity.

Day 2 (Tuesday 30 June) starts at 8.30am with a plenary Student Success Panel – *The value of a university degree + the role of WIL and Industry* – hosted by William Wragg (UniSQ). A dedicated poster viewing session is part of an extended morning tea and is followed by parallel sessions 05-07. Our new and additional conference presentation type – Launchpads – where multiple presenters share a one-hour presentation slot – are next on the program – with the formal program returning to parallel sessions 08-10 to conclude the day. As always the Conference dinner is a highlight of the Conference social program and provides an opportunity to unwind and have some fun with colleagues and friends. The theme Jungle Jam – sums it up. You know what to do!

After what promises to be a joyful night, formal proceedings will resume on Wednesday (Day 3) with parallel sessions 11-17 showcasing more wonderful initiatives across the sector. The final plenary at the culmination of Day 3 is Professor Danny Liu – Professor of Education Technologies (UniSyd) and one of the coordinators of the Castlereagh Statement – who will elaborate on good practice in the age of artificial intelligence. The 2026 Conference will close with the always much anticipated announcement about the Conference location for 2027, and an announcement of the submissions selected for publication in the Conference Issue of Student Success Journal.

We all look forward to meeting everyone in person at the Novotel Resort – Gubbi Gubbi Country - Sunshine Coast.

The Student Success Team

Emeritus Prof Karen Nelson,
Prof Rachael Field,
Jason Thomas,
Prof Sarah O'Shea,
Dr Cathy Stone,
Dr Kylie Austin,
Karen Seary,
and the STARS Fellows.

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CONFERENCE INFORMATION

STUDENT SUCCESS TEAM



Dr Kylie Austin
Director, Student Life
Edith Cowan University



Professor Emerita Tracey Bunda
STARS Fellow (2025)
The University of Queensland



Dr Kathy Egea
STARS Fellow (2021)
Senior Lecturer and First & Further Year Experience (FFYE) Coordinator,
Institute for Interactive Media and Learning (IML), University of Technology Sydney



Professor Rachael Field SFHEA
Conference Co-Chair
Professor of Law, Bond University
Australian Learning and Teaching Fellow, WLAQ QLD Woman Lawyer of the Year 2013
Editor, Student Success Journal



Professor Ella Kahu
STARS Fellow (2024)



Mary Kelly
STARS Fellow (2017)



Professor Sally Kift PFHEA
Inaugural STARS Fellow (2015)
President, Australian Learning and Teaching Fellows (ALTF)
Chair, Student Success Journal Advisory Board



Professor Kerri-Lee Krause
STARS Fellow (2019)
Chief Commissioner
TEQSA



Dr Linda Leach
STARS Fellow (2018)
Honorary Research Associate
Massey University



Emeritus Professor Karen Nelson PFHEA
STARS Conference Co-Chair
Chief Editor, Student Success Journal



Dr Ron Oliver
Inaugural STARS Fellow (2015)
Editor, Student Success Journal



Professor Sarah O'Shea PFHEA
STARS Fellow (2022)
Coordinator - STARS Constellations
Dean, Graduate Research
Charles Sturt University



Karen Seary
Associate Dean, School of Access Education
CQUniversity Australia



Professor Cathy Stone
STARS Fellow (2023)
Managing Editor, Student Success Journal



Jason Thomas
Event Director
Jason Thomas Events



Susan Thomas
Jason Thomas Events



Nick Zepke
STARS Fellow (2018)
Honorary Research Fellow
Massey University

SOCIAL FUNCTIONS

Welcome Reception

Date: Monday 29 June
Time: 5:15pm – 7:15pm
Venue: Sunshine Coast Convention Centre, Arrivals Lounge

Conference Dinner

Step into the wild for the Conference Dinner – a fun-filled evening of good food, great conversation, bold flavours and safari-style flair. It’s the perfect chance to celebrate, connect, and let the night get just a little bit wild.

Attendance at the Conference Dinner (Tuesday 30 June) is an additional cost to the registration fee. If you have purchased a ticket it will be included with your name tag.

Date: Tuesday 30 June
Time: 7:00pm – 11:00pm
Venue: Minyama 1 & 2
Dress: Safari Chic – think elevated jungle-inspired style, bold prints, natural tones, and statement accessories.

GENERAL INFORMATION

Mobile Phones

As a courtesy to fellow delegates and speakers, please ensure your phone is switched off or on silent during all conference sessions.

You may use small cameras or smart phones at the Conference to take photographs and videos/films for personal, non-commercial use, provided it’s not disruptive, intrusive or in breach of intellectual property or privacy rights or against the content owner’s will.

Lost Property

All lost property can be handed in/collected from the registration desk.

OUR SPONSORS

We are excited to have the support of the following organisations for the 2026 Conference and for their valuable contribution towards the running of the Student Success Conference.

PLATINUM SPONSOR



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For universities that believe **learning is the point**.

If humanity’s capacity to think is fundamental, then the value of a degree must remain a guarantee of that capacity.

The question we are all thinking about, is – will it?

What will it mean to be ‘educated’ in the future?

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Vygo empowers universities to deliver student support that is intuitive, impactful, and scalable. By connecting students to the services and communities they need most, Vygo simplifies access, reduces barriers, and streamlines workflows for staff. Our mission is to ensure every student has the opportunity to thrive, and we've built technology that sets a new standard for support.

Stop by our booth at the Student Success Conference 2026 to learn how Vygo can transform your student support ecosystem.

vygoapp.com

Adam Ahmed	1	👍	—
Alex Smith	2	👍	—
Bella Brown	2	👍	—
Bianca Baker	2	👍	—
Carlos Chen	1	👍	—
Conner Campbell	1	👍	—
Daisy Diaz	1	👍	—
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Police and Punish is over. Support & Validate.

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- Take away the fear: Give your students agency over their critical thinking development and assessment submission.

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FULL PROGRAM

- Key**
- RP - Refereed Paper
 - GPR - Good Practice Report
 - EI - Emerging Initiatives
 - IS - Industry Submission

CONFERENCE INFO P.06-11	PROGRAM P.13-35	PARALLEL SESSIONS 1-4 P.36-61	POSTER SESSIONS P.65-108	PARALLEL SESSIONS 5-7 P.109-126	LAUNCHPADS P.127-136	PARALLEL SESSIONS 8-17 P.137-199
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SUNDAY 28 JUNE 2026

ROOM	MARCOOLA
2:00pm - 4:00pm	Registration open
ROOM	SOLA LOUNGE & BAR
4:00pm - 6:00pm	When the STARS Collide Informal pre-conference networking / First-timers Meet and Greet

MONDAY 29 JUNE 2026

ROOM	SUNSHINE COAST CONVENTION CENTRE ARRIVALS LOUNGE			
7:30am	Registration open			
ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4
8:30am - 10:00am	Student Success Constellation Sessions Individuals forming a bigger picture together			
	First in Family	Peer Programs	Student Support and Wellbeing (ANZSSA)	Enabling (NAEEA)
10:00am - 10:30am	Morning Tea			
ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	
10:30am - 12:00pm	Student Success Constellation Sessions Individuals forming a bigger picture together			
	Student Partnership	First Year Experience	Student Equity (EPHEA)	
12:00pm - 12:45pm	Lunch			
12:45pm - 1:00pm	Conference Opening			
ROOM	MINYAMA 1 & 2			
1:00pm - 2:00pm	Keynote Presentation Student success in ruptured times: Where to now? Professor Kerri-Lee Krause Chief Commissioner, Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency			
ROOM	MINYAMA 1 & 2			
2:00pm - 2:15pm	Announcement of 2026 STARS Fellow			
2:15pm - 2:45pm	Afternoon Tea			

*Program subject to minor change

MONDAY 29 JUNE 2026

PARALLEL SESSIONS

Theme	Transition, Commencement & First Year Experience	Equity, Access & Belonging	Data, Analytics & Digital Innovation	Retention, Success & Student Outcomes	Curriculum, Pedagogy & Learning Design	Strategy, Partnerships & Institutional Change
ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
2:45pm - 3:15pm	01A EI Transitions	01B RP Success	01C EI Success	01D EI Success	01E EI Achievement	01F EI Success
Parallel Session 01	10-steps to week 1 readiness: An interactive checklist for pre-commencement administration and enrolment Abhineet Nirmal, Thi Yen Nhi Dao, Olga Kerle, Ellie Keegan CDU	Counting Students or Changing Systems? Reframing Equity Through Marginalisation and Systems Theory Professor Ryan Naylor University of Sydney	Learning Analytics Framework for UNE's Atrium Platform: Whole-of-Course Risk Identification Dr Sarita Guy, Mr Harrison Munday, Dr Robert Whannell, Dr David Paul, Dr William Billingsley, Dr Martin Schmude, Mr Johan Boshoff UNE	A layered approach in teaching law courses: My reflective journey Ms Anna Mazzocchi Adelaide University	A Relational and Pedagogical Model for Supporting Neurodivergent and Diverse Students in Learning Advising Sessions Dr Farzana Khan Monash	Engaging students in online learning: Using the STICK Framework A/Prof Suzi Syme Southern Cross University Anne Braund CQU
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ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
3:25pm - 3:55pm	02A GPR Transitions	02B RP Transitions	02C EI Students	02D EI Success	02E EI Students	02F EI Transitions
Parallel Session 02	The National FEE FREE Uni Ready (FFUR) Project, Report on Policy Settings & Best Practice Guide A/Prof Anna Bennett, Dr Kristen Allen, Dr Michelle Mansfield, Ms Nicole Garske, Ms Georgia Way UON	Can early offer schemes play a role in widening university participation and attainment in undergraduate health and science courses? A/Prof Rachel Whitsed CSU	Evaluating an AI agent to assist student learning in a 200-level Genetics practical Dr Gillian MacKay, Dr Rebecca Bird, Mr Janic Gorman, Dr Stephen Scott, Mr Ryan Walker, Ms Chen Wang University of Otago	Transforming Student Experience Through Students as Partners: Two Years of Impact at UTS Ms Sophie Indraputri, Mandy Kalan, Dr Elizabeth Brogan UTS	Academic advising for student agency: the GUIDE consultation model for learning support Ms Jane Habner FU	A two phased approach to implementing a mathematics support strategy in a large Australian University Ms Rosie Mackay, Ms Liz Cahir Monash University
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ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
4:05pm - 4:35pm	03A GPR Transitions		03C EI Success	03D EI Retention	03E RP Students	03F EI Transitions
Parallel Session 03	'I saw it as a way to even the playing field': findings from an evaluation of UNSW Gateway — Mary Teague, Dr Katie Osborne-Crowley, Dr Mick Warren <i>UNSW</i>		Between Student Voice and Educational Judgment: Reimagining Assessment in a GenAI Era — Jessica Z. Marrington, Chris Zehntner, Jo-Anne Ferreira <i>UniSQ</i>	Bite-Sized Learning, Big Impact: Enhancing the Student Experience with Microlearning — Dr Ana Lobo <i>UTAS</i>	Truth Telling, Renarrativisation, and Belonging: The Peregrination Pedagogical Framework for Supporting Equity Students in Higher Education — Dr Trixie James <i>CQU</i> — Dr Nicoli Barnes <i>Federation University</i> — Dr Tracey Muir <i>Australian Catholic University</i>	Creating a Whole of University Approach to Student Success: A Case Study on the Development of the UQ Transition Framework — Dr Dino Willox, Ms Yvonne Oberhollenzer <i>UQ</i>
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ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	
4:45pm - 5:15pm	04A EI Transitions	04B RP Students	04C GPR Students	04D EI Success	04E EI Success	
Parallel Session 04	Doing it my way: understanding student journeys through two online enabling pathways — A/Prof Amanda Daly <i>Griffith University</i>	From measuring to achieving educational equivalence: Defining equivalence through student voices in higher education — Michelle Roberts, A/Prof Steven Pace, Dr Amy Johnson <i>CQU</i>	From data to practice change: Co-designing a subject dashboard that enables inclusive, evidence-informed teaching — Dr Kathy Egea, Dr Amara Atif, A/Prof Gavin Paul, Sonia Matiuk, Professor Jo McKenzie <i>UTS</i>	Embodying Academic Skills through Practice-Led Actor Training for Holistic Learning (PATH) — Fiona Gentle <i>Excelsia University College</i>	Keeping the cup full: A case-based discussion on how a regional university's learning advising team manages vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout to ensure effective student support — Sarah Irvine, Melanie Downs, Kacie Fahey <i>UniSQ</i>	
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ROOM	ARRIVALS LOUNGE
5:15pm - 7:15pm	Conference Welcome Reception

TUESDAY 30 JUNE 2026

PARALLEL SESSIONS

7:45am	Registration Opens					
ROOM	MINYAMA 1 & 2					
8:30am - 9:30am	Student Success Panel The value of the university degree + the role of WIL and Industry Host: William Wragg <i>Senior Manager, Career Education & Inala University Study Hub (IUSH) / Support for Learning, UniSQ</i>					
9:30am - 10:20am	Morning Tea Poster Viewing Session					
Theme	Transition, Commencement & First Year Experience	Belonging, Equity & Student Voice	Data, Digital, AI & Evaluation	Learning, Curriculum & Academic Practice	Advising, Support & Retention	Strategy, Partnerships, Employability & Systems
ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
10:30am - 11:00am	05A EI Transitions	05B EI Students	05C EI Success	05D EI Success	05E EI Success	05F EI Transitions
Parallel Session 05	Successful school to university transition: A case study of embedded academic support in the Accelerated Pathways Program — Gail Heinrich, Nichola Hoffmann, Kim Cole, Ellen Lassman <i>UC</i> VIEW PAPER	What is student voice really worth? Insights from SVA's National Student Voice Reward and Recognition Survey — Ms Belinda Brear <i>SVA</i> Ms Lisa Connolly <i>UniSQ</i> VIEW PAPER	From triggers to risk scores: Scaling human-led predictive analytics to improve online postgraduate retention — Dr Leanne Ngo <i>La Trobe University</i> Mr Gustavo Batista <i>Risepoint</i> VIEW PAPER	Embedding Wellbeing in Enabling Curriculum: A strengths-based initiative — Amy Williams, Dr I-Lien Tsay <i>UTAS</i> VIEW PAPER	Supporting teachers supporting students at scale — Mr Aaron Baird, Ms Rebecca Denham, Ms Ruth Weeks <i>USYD</i> VIEW PAPER	Implementing Coherent Transition Through Systems, Story, and Experience — Liz Beresford, Kim Gray, Dr Kylie Austin, Clotilde Bullen <i>ECU</i> VIEW PAPER

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ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
11:10am - 11:40am	06A EI Transitions	06B EI Retention	06C EI Transitions	06D EI Success	06E RP Success	06F EI Success
Parallel Session 06	Transitional frictions: The collision as VET students meet the university ——— Ana Larsen <i>CQU</i> ——— Dr Susan Emmett <i>FedUni</i>	GUMOANA x TRM: A Culturally Grounded Exchange Initiative Supporting Māori and Pasifika Student Success ——— Paige Kemp <i>Griffith Uni</i>	Light-Touch, High-Impact: Ethnographic Outreach Evaluation in Schools ——— Dr Sarah Lambert <i>RMIT University</i> ——— Mr Mark van Bergen, Ms Sally Mitchell <i>Country Universities Centre Ovens</i> <i>Murray</i> ——— Ms Jacqui Boehringer <i>La Trobe University</i>	From isolated initiatives to integrated practice: A collaborative approach to curriculum embedding ——— Dr Danay Baker-Andresen, Ms Emily Collins, Mrs Rebekah Couper, Mr David Duncan, Dr Sara Hutchinson, Ms Jessica Lane, Mr Graham Matchett <i>UniSC</i>	Supporting Part-Time Students in a Full-Time World ——— A/Prof Kelly Linden, Dr Sarah Teakel <i>CSU</i>	Relational and practical approaches to professional and academic staff partnerships for first year student success ——— Ms Thi Yen Nhi Dao, Mr Abhineet Nirmal, Ms Olga Kerle, Ms Ellie Keegan <i>CDU</i>
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ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
11:50am - 12:20pm	07A EI Transitions	07B EI Students	07C EI Retention	07D EI Success	07E EI Success	07F EI Success
Parallel Session 07	When the Draft Writes Itself: Shifting Pathway Learning from Production to Judgement ——— Mr Danny Green, Mr Pierce Larkin <i>RMIT Vietnam</i>	How Peer Classroom Cultures Shape Indigenous Students' Quality of Life in Higher Education ——— Professor Maria Raciti <i>UniSC</i>	Investigating the use of advanced statistical analysis to understand the impact of uncoordinated and overlapping student equity interventions ——— Mr Clancy Birrell, Mr Muhammad Zia, Dr Ruth Kamrowski, Dr Roby Jose, Ms Laura Sturmer, Ms Vivian Wu, Professor Caroline Rueckert <i>Griffith University</i>	A 2026 Update: When less groupwork assessment is more: capturing students' diverse funds of knowledges in an ultimate year law course ——— Dr Paula Zito <i>Adelaide University</i>	Improvements to the Academic Success Program at UTS College ——— Mr Isaac Howell, Mr Aljonn Santos, Mr Todd Tang, Mr Thomas Mikhail <i>UTS College</i>	What does good look like? Value for Investment in disability services ——— Dr Nadine Zacharias, Mr Des Minton <i>The University of Melbourne</i> ——— Dr Mel Henry <i>Dr Mel Henry Consulting</i>
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12:20pm - 1:20pm

Lunch

Lunch

LAUNCHPAD SESSIONS

Theme
1:20pm - 2:20pm

ROOM

Belonging, Engagement & the Student Experience	Student Transitions, Progression & Academic Success	Equity, Agency & the Future of Higher Education
MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3
LPA1 Success	LPB1 Transitions	LPC1 Students
Building belonging through advising: a novel micro-interaction framework — Ms Aretha Zygouri <i>UNSW College</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	Supporting Diverse HDR Student Transition Through the Intensive Writing Course (IWC): An Academic Literacy Initiative at Monash University — Dr Thu Do, Dr Farzana Khan <i>Monash</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	Equipped to Succeed: The Be Ready Equity Initiative — Dr Trixie James, Kristin Freeman <i>CQU</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD
LPA2 Students	LPB2 Success	LPC2 Transitions
If belonging matters, why don't students show up? Rethinking how we design and deliver support — Elizabeth Naish, Anlon O'Brien <i>QUT</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	Speaking Studio: A New Model for Academic Oral Literacy — Dr Farzana Khan, Dr Ha Nguyen, Dr Sam Haugh <i>Monash</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	Building the Bridge: A Pre-Transition Academic Readiness Framework for Diploma Students Entering Second-Year Bachelor Programs — Ms Leonie Webster <i>CQU</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD
LPA3 Students	LPB3 Transitions	LPC3 Students
Students as staff: Do student employees need different training? — Ms Elizabeth Naish <i>QUT</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	From Undergraduate to Graduate Year: Reimagining Graduate Transitions Through Career-Readiness Partnerships — Ms Lisa Speedie, Ms Michelle Lane <i>CSU</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	A co-designed evaluation framework for equity initiatives that target students from refugee backgrounds — Mr Timothy McLennan, A/Prof Rose Amazan <i>UNSW</i> A/Prof Sally Baker <i>Refugee Education Australia</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD
LPA4 Success	LPB4 Success	LPC4 Success
Building psychological safety through physical learning environment strategies — Dr Eliza Kitchen <i>Flinders University</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	Targeted digital outreach to potentially at-risk first-year students — Ms Chi Luong <i>RMIT Vietnam</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	Recipe Cards, Not Reports: A Practical Workshop Method for Making Student Engagement Impact Visible — Dr David Fulcher, Ms Caitlin Pyle <i>UOW</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD
LPA5 Students		LPC5 Students
Success through their eyes: Developing support for impact and equity — Mr Martin Luna Juncal, Mr Donald Robert Jeffrey <i>GU</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD	VIEW LAUNCHPAD	Empowering Indigenous voices in higher education: AI-assisted integration of Indigenous perspectives — Dr Vanessa Sewell, Ms Katherine Carter <i>UNE</i> VIEW LAUNCHPAD

*Program subject to minor change

PARALLEL SESSIONS

ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
2:30pm - 3:00pm	08A EI Transitions	08B GPR Students	08C EI Success	08D EI Success	08E EI Success	08F EI Retention
Parallel Session 08	Co-designing Student-Centred Strategies to Strengthen the First-Year Experience at a Regional University Dr May El Haddad, Ms Tara Gamble, Dr Ben Turner, Dr Loretta Anderson, Dr Rob Buhmann, Ms Kerri-Anne Von Deest, Ms Belinda Christensen, Ms Ciara Habaldo <i>UniSC</i> VIEW PAPER	Indigenising the university curriculum: An interdisciplinary collaborative approach between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators Katelyn Barney, Tracey Bunda <i>UQ</i> VIEW PAPER	Serial enrollers or strategic planners? A learning analytics whodunit Natalie Oostergo, Aleesha Love <i>UniSQ</i> VIEW PAPER	Atrium: An Emerging Initiative for Academic Outreach and Student Success Harrison Munday, Sarita Guy, Robert Whannell, Martin Schmude, Johan Boshoff, Ben Davies <i>UNE</i> VIEW PAPER	Name it to Tame it: Sector Wide Unit Failure Typologies to Improve Student Success Mr Neil van der Ploeg, A/Prof Kelly Linden, Dr Sarah Teakel <i>CSU</i> VIEW PAPER	Where there is a WIL there is a Way: A collaborative approach Mrs Karen Latten, Ms Nichole Orwin <i>RMIT</i> VIEW PAPER

3:00pm - 3:30pm

Afternoon Tea

Afternoon Tea

ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
3:30pm - 4:00pm	09A EI Transitions	09B RP Students	09C RP Achievement	09D EI Students	09E EI Retention	09F EI Transitions
Parallel Session 09	Embedding Academic Skills in a Large First-Year Programme Dr Lisa Russell, Dr Rebecca J Bird <i>University of Otago</i> VIEW PAPER	The Students We Don't See: Characterising Student Experience in Australian Higher Education Dr Novia Minaee, Dr Paul Koshy, A/Prof Gemma Cadby, Professor Ian Li <i>ACSES</i> VIEW PAPER	Gen AI-first Maths Support at a Regional Australian University Dr Luis Camacho, Dr Christopher Bridge, Professor Birgit Loch <i>Federation University Australia</i> VIEW PAPER	Cultivating Resonance in Indigenous Students' Experiences of University Professor Maria Raciti <i>UniSC</i> VIEW PAPER	Neuroaffirming Practices in QUT Student Success Coaching: Enhancing Student Engagement and Retention Chloe Davies <i>QUT</i> VIEW PAPER	Building professional capabilities through research-based, work-integrated learning: The JCU Undergraduate Research Internship Dr Amanda Krause <i>James Cook University</i> VIEW PAPER

10 minute change over

10 minute change over

ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
4:10pm - 4:40pm	10A RP Transitions	10B EI Success	10C EI Success	10D EI Transitions	10E EI Success	10F EI Success
Parallel Session 10	What sort of engineer am I? Understanding identity and belonging in engineering major selection Dr Amy Young, Dr Sam Cunningham, Ms Renee Nightingale <i>QUT</i> Ms Aurora Greene <i>UoM</i>	"Change the future": Educating healthcare students for LGBTQIA+ inclusive practice Dr Gemma Mann, Dr Corey Bloomfield, Dr Tina McAdie, Dr Madeline Sprajcer, Natalie Browning, Jenn Stanley, Lisa Hurring <i>CQU</i>	AI-supported problem-solving and reflexivity in legal education Natalie Oostergo, Professor Lynda Crowley-Cyr, Dr Julie Copley <i>UniSQ</i>	Indigenising the curriculum in pathway programs: Centring staff and student perspectives of teaching and learning Bronwyn Fredericks, Katelyn Barney, Tracey Bunda, Nisa Richy, Daniel Taylor-Griffiths <i>The University of Queensland</i> Ash Moor <i>UQ College</i> Scott Parlett <i>University of New South Wales</i> Kirsten Hausia <i>The University of Melbourne</i>	Designing GenAI mentoring for women cybersecurity students: Supporting confidence, engagement and workforce transition Dr Leanne Ngo, Dr Javed Chowdhury, Mary George <i>La Trobe University</i>	CUC-OUA collaboration pilot: strengthening regional online student success through integrated and place-based support Ms Ange Rice <i>OUA</i>
	VIEW PAPER	VIEW PAPER	VIEW PAPER	VIEW PAPER	VIEW PAPER	VIEW PAPER

ROOM	MINYAMA 1 & 2
7:00pm - 11:00pm	Jungle Jam Conference Dinner: A Celebration of Student Success Step into the wild for a night of bold flavours, untamed rhythms, and safari-style fun as we celebrate the achievements that make our community roar.

WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2026

PARALLEL SESSIONS

Theme	Transition, Commencement & Pathways	Belonging, Equity & Student Voice	Data, Digital, AI & Evaluation	Learning, Curriculum & Academic Practice	Advising, Support & Retention	Strategy, Partnerships, Employability & Systems
ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
9:00am - 9:30am	11A EI Students	11B EI Students		11D EI Retention	11E EI Retention	11F EI Transitions
Parallel Session 11	Developing Evaluation Practice: First Year Experience Program Influence on Student Equity Outcomes Ms Elisa McGowan, Ms Clara Yuan, Ms Katie Douglas <i>UWA</i> Dr Nadine Zacharias <i>SUT</i> Professor Ian Li, Mr Oliver Constantine <i>ACSES</i> Dr Luke Webster <i>Curtin</i> VIEW PAPER	Strategies for Enhancing Belonging and Connectedness for Under-represented Students Learning Online Professor Jill Lawrence, A/Prof Alice Brown <i>UniSQ</i> Dr Megan Kimber <i>UQ</i> Professor Nayana Parange <i>AU</i> Professor Puspha Sinnayah, A/Prof Jay Cohen, A/Prof Christopher Fisher <i>VU</i> VIEW PAPER		From Reactive to Proactive: Redesigning Academic Advising in an Era of Curriculum Transformation Dr Kylie Austin, Ms. Kylie Corbett, Ms. Jessica Dahl, Ms. Erin Bishop <i>ECU</i> VIEW PAPER	Nudging Beyond Student Engagement and Retention: Do Nudges Improve Students' Sense of Belonging? Ali Enright, Matt Christian, Georgina Maddox, Yvette Davey, Nicolas Perrota <i>Flinders University</i> VIEW PAPER	An Interdisciplinary Employability Curriculum Intervention for Occupational Therapy Students Dr Jacqueline Burgess <i>UniSC</i> VIEW PAPER
	10 minute change over					
9:40am - 10:10am	12A EI Transitions	12B EI Students	12C EI Success	12D EI Transitions	12E RP Students	12F EI Transitions
Parallel Session 12	Encouraging students' participation in university: What motivates first-year students to participate on campus? Dr Claudia Rivera Munoz, Dr Samantha Marangell <i>University of Melbourne</i> VIEW PAPER	Myths and Misconception: Realities of Incarcerated Students Success in Higher Education Mx Tahnya L Bella, Dr Cristy Bartlett <i>UniSQ</i> VIEW PAPER	A New Approach to Sessional Staff Training at Flinders University Dr Grace Chipperfield, Dr Georgina Maddox <i>Flinders University</i> VIEW PAPER	Future Ready Integrity: Whole of College Assessment Reform Dr Mark Hinchey, Maria Charalambous <i>UNSW College</i> VIEW PAPER	The Osmosis Plateau: The Limits of Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition in South African Education Students Ilse Fouche, Maria Prozesky <i>University of the Witwatersrand</i> VIEW PAPER	Building employability through reflexive practice, co-design and harnessing an untapped opportunity for career learning in undergraduate science degrees A/Prof Sharon La Fontaine, Mrs Sharon Berman, Ms Cathy Caballero, A/Prof Karen Young, Dr Anthony R. Rendall, Dr Lynda O'Sullivan, Dr Jen Chung, Mr Julius Daguman Jr, Mrs Amanda McPherson <i>Deakin University</i> VIEW PAPER
	Morning Tea					
10:10am - 10:40am						

ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
10:40am - 11:10am	13A EI Transitions	13B EI Students	13C EI Success	13D EI Success	13E EI Retention	13F EI Transitions
Parallel Session 13	Beyond expectations: Supporting student confidence through action-based response in the first-year Courtney Geritz, Professor Maria Raciti, Dr Aaron Tham, Dr Da Eul Jeong <i>UniSC</i> VIEW PAPER	myBCom GO! Embedding belonging in the curriculum via a scavenger hunt Dr Veronica Smith, Ms Carrol Besseling <i>UNSW</i> VIEW PAPER	Breaking the GenAI efficiency paradigm through critical AI literacy Dr John Pike <i>AU</i> VIEW PAPER	Replacing costly textbooks with Open Educational Resources to improve student learning Dr Sarah Teakel, A/Prof Kelly Linden <i>CSU</i> VIEW PAPER	Transforming early outreach for student success: Implementing stream Mr Matt Hingston, A/Prof Jane Skalicky <i>University of Tasmania</i> VIEW PAPER	AchieVeU to NeuroNavi: An Equity-Led, Neurodivergent-Informed Transition Practice Robert Worrell <i>Victoria University</i> VIEW PAPER

10 minute change over

10 minute change over

ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
11:20am - 11:50am	14A EI Success	14B EI Students	14C EI Transitions	14D EI Success	14E EI Success	14F EI Achievement
Parallel Session 14	Structure, Relevance, Success: A Two-Year Journey Transforming First Year Anatomy & Physiology Dr Louise Pemberton <i>CSU</i> VIEW PAPER	Low hanging fruit: Cost of living support Clare Senior, Tennille Trevaskis <i>UWA</i> VIEW PAPER	Exploring Whether Chatbots Can Enhance Critical Thinking, Communication and Clinical Reasoning in Nursing Students Tran Dinh-Le, Kathryn Fogarty, Marko Antic, Amelia Di Paolo, Dr Caroline Havery, Dr Leila Gholizadeh, Vicki Ibbotson, Dr Elizabeth Brogan <i>University of Technology Sydney</i> VIEW PAPER	Raising feedback monsters responsibly Mrs Rebekah Couper, Dr Danay Baker-Andresen <i>UniSC</i> VIEW PAPER	"I just clicked and hoped": Website redesign with student success in mind Megan Pozzi, Denise McTaggart <i>UniSQ</i> VIEW PAPER	Industry-engaged graduate research: Widening HDR participation through a Graduate Certificate pathway at CQUniversity Dr Grant Andrews, Dr Barbra Zupan, Dr Adam Rose, Dr Charlotte Gupta <i>CQU</i> VIEW PAPER

10 minute change over

10 minute change over

ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
12:00pm - 12:30pm	15A RP Students	15B EI Success	15C EI Students	15D EI Achievement	15E EI Students	15F EI Success
Parallel Session 15	Reading the Room: Understanding Student Approaches to Respectful Behaviour in Informal Study Space on Campus Sascha Jenkins <i>CDU</i> Catharine Pruscino, Caitlin Austin-Kanafani, Daniel Hamilton, Jasmine Lewin <i>UTS</i> VIEW PAPER	Student perceptions of what is important for success Dr Rebecca J Bird, Dr Stephen G Scott <i>University of Otago</i> VIEW PAPER	Supporting Every Learner: Developing an Inclusive Peer-Leader Training Model Through Cross-Campus Collaboration Jules Page, Soudad Ahmen <i>Murdoch University</i> VIEW PAPER	Simplifying rubric design to improve marker efficiency and reliability in online assessment: An action research study A/Prof Tracey Ahern, Tracey Gooding <i>JCU</i> VIEW PAPER	From trauma aware to trauma responsive: A framework for trauma-informed and empathetic student support Miss Melanie Downs, Mrs Sarah Irvine, Mrs Kacie Fahey <i>UniSQ</i> VIEW PAPER	Ready12360: Tracking Student Employability Confidence Over a Degree Lynda O'Sullivan, Michael Wright, Karen Young, Sophie McKenzie <i>Deakin University</i> VIEW PAPER

12:30pm - 1:30pm

Lunch

Lunch

ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
1:30pm - 2:00pm		16B EI Success	16C IS Success	16D EI Success	16E RP Retention	16F EI Students
Parallel Session 16		Igniting the NeuroSpark: A student-designed peer learning program for neurodivergent students at a Queensland regional university Kacie Fahey, Alexis Van Fleet, Sharni Ashwell <i>UniSQ</i> VIEW PAPER	Ultimate student success: Developing critical graduate attributes at scale in an AI-enabled higher education experience Chris Fitzpatrick, Matt Henderson <i>Studiosity</i> VIEW PAPER	Feedforward-Feedback Model: Enhancing Feedback Literacy in a Large First-Year Health Course Dr May El Haddad <i>UniSC</i> VIEW PAPER	Enhancing Student Retention through the Implementation of Academic Teaching and Learning Interventions Marty Schmude, Ingrid Harrington, Robert Whannell, Cat Johnston, Kristy O'Neill, Rachael Adlington, Harrison Munday, Sarita Guy <i>UNE</i> VIEW PAPER	Project RESPECT: Implementation of the student training package in response to the National Code Dr Gemma Mann, Dr Portia Simelane, Tania Wissemann, Tiff Blake, Dr Michael Dzator <i>CQU</i> VIEW PAPER

10 minute change over

10 minute change over

ROOM	MINYAMA 1	MINYAMA 2	MINYAMA 3	MINYAMA 4	WANDINY 1	WANDINY 2
2:10pm - 2:40pm	17A EI Transitions	17B EI Success	17C EI Students		17E EI Students	17F EI Achievement
Parallel Session 17	Closing the loop: Graduation Portfolio as a capstone transition-out experience for science students Dr Helena Pacitti, Tom Rowlands, Lakia Turner, A/Prof Shannan Maisey <i>UNSW</i> VIEW PAPER	Universal Design for Learning as a Strategic Use of the Disability Support Fund: Improving Outcomes for Students with Disability A/Prof Kelly Linden, Dr Noelia Roman, Ms Samantha Tiernan <i>CSU</i> VIEW PAPER	Creative, Student-Centred Approaches to Academic Integrity Education in the Age of Generative AI Dr Megan Axelsen, Dr Chris Zehntner <i>UniSQ</i> VIEW PAPER		Transforming educators' frustration into self-efficacy: An emerging initiative using holistic, ecological perspectives on student support and emotional labour Ana Larsen <i>CQU</i> VIEW PAPER	Reflection as preparation: Co-designing stigma education for interdisciplinary MH/AOD placements Alsa Wu, Thomas Connell, Dr Beng Eu, Dr Chris Groot, Dr Keiran Allen, Lisa Wright, Campbell McKay, Carolyn Cracknell, Dr Kim Allison, Denise Ho, Victoria Rayner <i>UoM</i> VIEW PAPER

2:40pm - 3:10pm

Afternoon Tea

Afternoon Tea

ROOM	MINYAMA 1 & 2
3:10pm - 4:10pm	Keynote Session Professor Danny Liu <i>Professor of Educational Technologies (Education Focused)</i> <i>The University of Sydney</i>
4:10pm - 4:20pm	Close / Journal Announcement / 2027 Announcement

MONDAY

CONFERENCE INFO P. 06-11	PROGRAM P. 13-35	PARALLEL SESSIONS 1-4 P. 39-61	POSTER SESSIONS P. 65-108	PARALLEL SESSIONS 5-7 P. 109-126	LAUNCHPADS P. 127-136	PARALLEL SESSIONS 8-17 P. 137-199
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KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

MONDAY 29 JUNE 2026

1:00PM – 2:00PM

MINYAMA 1 & 2

Student success in ruptured times: Where to now?



Professor Kerri-Lee Krause
Chief Commissioner,
Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency

Biography

Professor Krause (PhD, GAICD PFHEA, FSRHE) is an experienced higher education leader having held senior executive roles across several Australian universities, including Provost – Victoria University, DVC Academic – La Trobe University, DVC Student Life – The University of Melbourne, and Vice-Chancellor – Avondale University. Combining regulatory and governance expertise with strategic executive leadership, Kerri-Lee has a track record as an experienced non-executive board director with a deep commitment to governance quality and transparency.

Commencing as Chief Commissioner, Tertiary Education Quality and Standards Agency in 2025, she previously served as Chair of the Higher Education Standards Panel, advising respective Education Ministers on quality and standards for almost a decade. Professor Krause specialises in leading agile organisational reform with learners and cultural transformation at the heart. Author of ‘Learner-centred leadership in higher education: A practical guide’, she is internationally recognised for her higher education policy research, bringing a practical lens to contemporary leadership and curriculum challenges while championing quality, integrity, innovation and accountability.

2:45PM - 3:15PM
PARALLEL SESSION
01

CONFERENCE INFO P.06-11	PROGRAM P.13-35	PARALLEL SESSIONS 1-4 P.39-61	POSTER SESSIONS P.65-108	PARALLEL SESSIONS 5-7 P.109-126	LAUNCHPADS P.127-136	PARALLEL SESSIONS 8-17 P.137-199
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01A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

10-steps to week 1 readiness: An interactive checklist for pre-commencement administration and enrolment.

Abhineet Nirmal, Thi Yen Nhi Dao, Olga Kerle, Ellie Keegan
CDU

Administrative overload is a recognised barrier to student transition and early engagement during the pre-commencement period in higher education. This paper presents the New to CDU Checklist, a ten-step hybrid onboarding intervention developed at Charles Darwin University (CDU) to support students in completing the essential administrative tasks and improving Week 1 readiness. The interactive checklist incorporates QR codes and embedded links that direct students to a landing page with key actions and short instructional videos. Evaluation across four semesters indicates high usability and positive feedback for student preparedness. This presentation will outline the checklist design, development process, and its effectiveness in supporting student transition.

01B REFEREED PAPER SUCCESS

Counting Students or Changing Systems? Reframing Equity Through Marginalisation and Systems Theory

Professor Ryan Naylor
University of Sydney

Equity in higher education is commonly framed through administratively defined groups and outcome metrics, obscuring the institutional processes that reproduce exclusion and deficit narratives. This paper aims to reframe equity by foregrounding marginalisation as a context-dependent process and applying systems theory to illuminate how organisational structures and interdependencies generate patterned inequalities. The study synthesises marginalisation scholarship with systems-thinking frameworks to develop a conceptual model to provide theoretical and pragmatic interventions for understanding and addressing exclusion in higher education. Findings show that group-based equity frameworks privilege measurement over mechanism, while a marginalisation lens exposes institutional practices and system dynamics that structure student experiences. A systems-oriented marginalisation framework offers greater explanatory power and clearer leverage points for structural change, shifting responsibility from 'fixing students' to redesigning institutional systems to reduce exclusion. Leverage points are identified to enact institutional change.

01C EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Learning Analytics Framework for UNE's Atrium Platform: Whole-of-Course Risk Identification

Dr Sarita Guy, Mr Harrison Munday, Dr Robert Whannell, Dr David Paul, Dr William Billingsley,
Dr Martin Schmude, Mr Johan Boshoff
UNE

This Emerging Initiative paper outlines the development of a predictive learning analytics framework within Atrium, the University of New England's (UNE) coordinated student success platform. Moving beyond unit-level early alert systems, the framework aims to support whole-of-course risk identification and proactive student support. The framework consisted of two steps. Step One involved identifying predictors of student success. Step Two involved aggregating unit-level probabilities to generate course-level student risk profiles, identifying students as either low, medium, or high-risk. This scalable, transferable approach for enhancing student success in equity-focused contexts will allow academics to identify students at highest risk, guiding more targeted student support.

01D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

A layered approach in teaching law courses: My reflective journey

Ms Anna Mazzocchetti
Adelaide University

In 2021, I joined the South Australian Institute of Business and Technology (SAIBT), the then pathway provider to the University of South Australia (UniSA) as course coordinator in teaching Business Law, a module predominantly featuring diverse student cohort enrolments all the while teaching in the Law discipline at UniSA and now Adelaide University. My initial exposure to the many and varied diverse student journeys and associated learning challenges highlighted to me the need for diversity cohort educative support. This prompted my reflection into and conducting research of my teaching practices to foster positive student learning experiences and success. This presentation focuses on my reflective journey so far regarding my emerging initiative of a layered approach in teaching law courses and current research on a "Layers" conceptual paper which is intended to be tested.

01E EMERGING INITIATIVE

ACHIEVEMENT

A Relational and Pedagogical Model for Supporting Neurodivergent and Diverse Students in Learning Advising Sessions

Dr Farzana Khan
Monash

This initiative introduces a Relational-Pedagogical Learning Advising Model designed for short, recurring 25 minute online advising sessions that support undergraduate, postgraduate, and doctoral students, including neurodiverse, mature aged, and culturally diverse learners. The model frames learning advising as a pedagogically informed, relational practice grounded in co construction, scaffolded skill development, and culturally responsive support. Integrating Vygotskian scaffolding, strengths based feedback, and digital progress tracking, it demonstrates how structured relationality and intentional pedagogy enhance academic confidence, independent learning, and student success. Practice-based observations indicate improved engagement, clearer academic pathways, and increased retention for students with complex learning needs. This initiative offers a replicable framework for institutions seeking to strengthen student transitions, achievement, and persistence.

01F EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

Engaging students in online learning: Using the STICK Framework

A/Prof Suzi Syme
Southern Cross University

Anne Braund
COU

As online study options expand post-COVID, fostering student engagement remains a critical challenge in Enabling education. This presentation introduces the STICK framework—Student connection, Teacher presence, Institutional support, Curriculum design, and Knowledge—developed with NAEAA input to enhance assurance of learning in online contexts. Building on established literature and “sticky campus” concepts, we examine strategies that support diverse learners to navigate digital, social, and motivational barriers. Participants will explore alignment with STARS themes and contribute to a shared NAEAA online learning and teaching-innovation toolbox.

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02A GOOD PRACTICE REPORT TRANSITIONS

The National FEE FREE Uni Ready (FFUR) Project, Report on Policy Settings & Best Practice Guide

A/Prof Anna Bennett, Dr Kristen Allen, Dr Michelle Mansfield, Ms Nicole Garske, Ms Georgia Way
UON

This 'Good Practice Report' outlines findings from the recently completed 'National FEE-FREE Uni Ready (FFUR) Project' (2026) to share the work and recommendations on FFUR policy settings and principles. Together, these aim to strengthen transitions into higher education for underrepresented cohorts. We focus on introducing the Best Practice Guide, FFUR Framework elements, highlighting the importance of place-based and cohort-tailored contextualisation. Drawing on sector consultation, including with participant universities and research literature, we outline key elements of the taxonomy of FFUR offerings, common learning outcomes, and governance guidelines that collectively enable portability, quality, and equity. We contextualise FFUR offerings within Australia's evolving pathways ecosystem and show how the FFUR Framework can be adapted across place and tailored to specific cohorts. This 'Good Practice Report' contributes a practical architecture to both understand and operationalise equitable pathways, with scalable concepts and evaluation principles aligned to the conference theme of 'Transitions: pathways to tertiary education'.

02B REFEREED PAPER TRANSITIONS

Can early offer schemes play a role in widening university participation and attainment in undergraduate health and science courses?

A/Prof Rachel Whitsed
CSU

Early offer schemes have become increasingly popular in Australia, allowing school leavers to secure a place at university before final Year 12 exams. Motivations for universities to offer, and students to apply for, early offers are varied. This research investigates, through analysis of applicants to science and health programs at a regional Australian university, whether there is a role for early offer schemes in widening participation and attainment for equity students. The research also investigates whether students who enter through early offer schemes differ from the rest of the cohort in terms of academic success, and the impact of early offer criteria. The analysis found that a high proportion of equity students use early entry schemes, and that their attainment, measured by first year success and retention, is on par with the rest of their cohort. Benefits of early offer schemes were found to outweigh any perceived or actual disadvantages.

02C EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

Evaluating an AI agent to assist student learning in a 200-level Genetics practical

Dr Gillian MacKay, Dr Rebecca Bird, Mr Janic Gorman, Dr Stephen Scott, Mr Ryan Walker,
Ms Chen Wang
University of Otago

A Cogniti chat agent was developed to scaffold student learning in a 200-level Genetics laboratory. The agent was piloted with 131 students. We analysed student chat logs, time spent using the agent and a student survey. Early findings suggest that the chat agent provides a useful tool for the students in a busy lab environment, but that staff-student interaction is still necessary.

02D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Transforming Student Experience Through Students as Partners: Two Years of Impact at UTS

Ms Sophie Indraputri, Mandy Kalan, Dr Elizabeth Brogan
UTS

Enabling meaningful student contribution to teaching, learning, and institutional improvement is central to enhancing the contemporary student experience. The UTS Students as Partners Project Grants program supports student-led initiatives addressing priority areas, including academic support, equity, and inclusive learner engagement, with staff partners providing advisory and institutional guidance. Delivered through a Library-led, SSAF-funded model, the program supported 11 projects in 2024 and expanded to 12 projects in 2025 across multiple faculties and professional units. This initiative demonstrates how a structured, student-led partnership can generate sustainable improvements in curriculum, policy, and practice at scale while offering a transferable model for embedding partnerships across institutional contexts.

02E EMERGING INITIATIVE

STUDENTS

Academic advising for student agency: the GUIDE consultation model for learning support

Ms Jane Habner
FU

Individual consultations are central to academic language and learning support, yet their pedagogical basis remains underdefined. This paper introduces the GUIDE model, a structured approach designed to support student agency in time-limited learning advisor consultations. Grounded in academic literacies and dialogic learning, the model brings into practice constructivist principles through five stages: Greet, Understand, Identify, Develop, and Encourage. Developed as a practice-led initiative, GUIDE offers a practical approach to shifting consultations from corrective feedback toward student-centred learning development.

02F EMERGING INITIATIVE

A two phased approach to implementing a mathematics support strategy in a large Australian University

Ms Rosie Mackay, Ms Liz Cahir
Monash University

To support student success in mathematics during the COVID pandemic, our University instigated a new mathematics strategy. This good practice report outlines the design, implementation, evaluation, and subsequent redesign of an institutional mathematics support strategy at a large university with campuses across Australia and South-East Asia. The initiative drew upon common sector practices such as diagnostic testing, support for help-seeking and self-directed study. The initiative took a two-phase approach while navigating institutional priorities and project limitations and addressing emerging policy changes in admission requirements. Phase 1 consisted of a large-scale on-site test ($n=4,542$) directing students to self-help modules. Evaluation of academic performance data, engagement with learning resources and pre- and post-diagnostic survey responses revealed mixed learner experiences and the unclear impact of the initiative on academic performance. Phase 2 redesigned the approach to focus on student autonomy and assumed knowledge with positive preliminary results. This good practice report reflects on the challenge in designing initiatives that meet student engagement preferences and have the intended impact on student performance. The findings from the two phases have implications for other universities designing strategies to support students transitioning into tertiary courses with mathematics-based requirements.

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03A GOOD PRACTICE REPORT TRANSITIONS

'I saw it as a way to even the playing field': findings from an evaluation of UNSW Gateway

Mary Teague, Dr Katie Osborne-Crowley, Dr Mick Warren
UNSW

This Good Practice Report follows on from an Emerging Initiative presented at STARS 2025 which outlined the UNSW Gateway Admission Pathway and Program (UNSW Gateway). The research reported here is the result of the first evaluation of this initiative using the UNSW Gateway Theory of Change. Since the introduction of UNSW Gateway, the number of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students and students from either low SES or educationally disadvantaged backgrounds enrolling at UNSW has nearly doubled, representing an increase in the access rate for these cohorts from 17.5% in 2021 to 24.5% in 2025. While these enrolment trends suggest UNSW Gateway is working to produce its intended impact, theory-based inquiry is required to understand how the program has had this impact. Drawing on 26 semi-structured student interviews, this study's primary finding supports the application of contextual admission practices (adjusted-ATAR offers) to address academic attainment barriers that students from equity backgrounds often face in seeking access to research intensive universities such as UNSW. In discussing broader study findings which may be useful in developing outreach initiatives at similar universities, this Good Practice Report also offers researchers and practitioners insight into the application of theory-based evaluation practices.

03B GOOD PRACTICE REPORT TRANSITIONS

Peer Mentoring and First-Year Transition: A Global Evidence Synthesis

Vivian Wang
University of Canterbury

Peer mentoring and related peer-led support models are widely used as structured approaches to supporting student transition into higher education. This Emerging Initiative provides a synthesis of evidence arising from 10 international peer-reviewed studies (2017-2025) across North America, Europe, Oceania, Africa, and Asia, spanning undergraduate, postgraduate, and discipline-based contexts including health sciences, education, nursing, academic writing, and student wellbeing programmes.

03C EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Between Student Voice and Educational Judgment: Reimagining Assessment in a GenAI Era

Jessica Z. Marrington, Chris Zehntner, Jo-Anne Ferreira
UniSQ

GenAI is reshaping how learning is evidenced and assured, placing assessment design at the centre of reform across higher education. Sector level guidance offers direction but leaves institutions to make decisions shaped by disciplinary priorities and student contexts. This presentation reports a project at an Australian regional university drawing on student experiences, attitudes, and preferences to inform assessment design and feedback reform in a GenAI era. Foregrounding student voice as a source of evidence, the initiative also examines the tensions that arise when student reported preferences meet pedagogical intent, disciplinary standards, learning outcomes, and assurance of learning requirements. We argue that student voice must be considered through a critical educational lens to ensure a balance between disciplinary standards, learning outcomes, and graduate attributes. Emerging insights from a mixed methods survey (N ≈ 470) will be shared, alongside an approach for embedding student voice transparently in defensible, GenAI era assessment reform.

03D EMERGING INITIATIVE RETENTION

Bite-Sized Learning, Big Impact: Enhancing the Student Experience with Microlearning

Dr Ana Lobo
UTAS

In the digital age, microlearning has emerged as a transformative approach to education, offering learners the flexibility to engage with content in bite-sized formats that align with their needs and preferences. As part of teaching at University College, innovative initiatives such as JITS Radio and a new series of YouTube Shorts for the Professional Communication unit exemplify this pedagogical shift, providing students with targeted, accessible, and flexible learning opportunities. This presentation explores the theoretical underpinnings of microlearning, its practical applications within these initiatives, and its impact on enhancing student engagement and academic success. By integrating insights from recent literature, the aim is to demonstrate how microlearning strategies can address diverse learner needs and foster a more adaptable and inclusive educational environment.

03E REFEREED PAPER
STUDENTS

Truth Telling, Renarrativisation, and Belonging: The Peregrination
Pedagogical Framework for Supporting Equity Students in Higher Education

Dr Trixie James
CQU

Dr Nicoli Barnes
Federation University

Dr Tracey Muir
Australian Catholic University

Students entering higher education through Enabling programs frequently experience themselves as outsiders in the academic field. These individuals often feel unfamiliar with, and excluded from, the norms, expectations, and practices of university study, with these perceptions shaped by prior educational experiences and internalised deficit narratives. In contrast, becoming an insider involves developing a sense of legitimacy, confidence, and familiarity with the academic environment, affording students to participate more fully in its practices. While belonging is widely recognised as central to student engagement and persistence, less attention has been given to the pedagogical practices that support the development of belonging among students who initially feel marginalised in higher education. Drawing on qualitative data from eight students enrolled in an Australian Enabling program, this paper examines how educator practices support students’ journeys from outsider to insider in the field of university. Building on the Peregrination of Belonging model (James, 2024), the paper introduces the Peregrination Pedagogical Framework, which identifies three interconnected processes through which educators foster belonging and agency: truth telling, renarrativisation, and the development of a subversive habitus. Situated within pedagogical environments characterised by care and dialogic engagement, these processes support students to reinterpret their educational experiences and reconstruct their identities as legitimate participants in higher education.

03F EMERGING INITIATIVE
TRANSITIONS

Creating a Whole of University Approach to Student Success: A Case Study
on the Development of the UQ Transition Framework

Dr Dino Willox, Ms Yvonne Oberhollenzer
UQ

In 2025, the University of Queensland developed a Student Transition Framework to support an increasingly diverse student cohort across a comprehensive discipline landscape. The purpose of this whole-of-institution approach to transition is to provide a common structure and language, enabling staff to collaboratively improve student success. The process of co-creation with students, whose lived experiences shaped its direction and depth, ensured that the Framework reflects the realities of navigating university life. Critically, the co-creation process itself became a vehicle for cultural change, shifting mindsets across the institution as staff reflected on the value of their own lived experience.

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04A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Doing it my way: understanding student journeys through two online enabling pathways

A/Prof Amanda Daly
Griffith University

EmpowerED, a Fee-Free Uni Ready course, delivers a timetabled, cohort based program on campus and online supporting diverse students. Internal reviews identified higher attrition among online students, prompting the development of an asynchronous, on demand version of the program designed to offer greater flexibility and improve retention. Drawing on institutional data and interviews with students, this paper compares the experiences of students in both modes, exploring motivations for enrolment, engagement with learning, and their transitions into further study. This work offers insights into student needs to be considered when designing online enabling pathways that promote student success.

04B REFEREED PAPER STUDENTS

From measuring to achieving educational equivalence: Defining equivalence through student voices in higher education

Michelle Roberts, A/Prof Steven Pace, Dr Amy Johnson
CQU

Current approaches to assessing equivalence between face-to-face and online learning focus on institutional outcomes – but outcomes alone do not tell the full story. This paper presents the educational equivalence iceberg model, developed from interviews with 21 undergraduate students who had experienced both study modes. Their perceptions of equivalence focused consistently on experiential factors rather than outcomes. The model comprises five layers: institutional measures, environmental factors, learning community factors, learning design factors, and, at the foundation, educator factors – reframing how we think about educational equivalence so we can move from measuring to achieving it.

04C GOOD PRACTICE REPORT STUDENTS

From data to practice change: Co-designing a subject dashboard that enables inclusive, evidence-informed teaching

Dr Kathy Egea, Dr Amara Atif, A/Prof Gavin Paul, Sonia Matiuk, Professor Jo McKenzie
UTS

Higher education institutions are increasingly data-rich yet insight-poor, with learning analytics often experienced by academics as difficult to interpret and disconnected from everyday teaching practice. Transition Pedagogy emphasises that intentional inclusive practice relies on educators having a clear, evidence-based understanding of their student cohorts, yet such visibility is rarely available at subject level. This paper reflects on the design, development, and sustained use of an institution-wide Subject Dashboard that makes cohort level diversity, enrolment patterns, and longitudinal performance data visible and usable for subject coordinators. Co-designed with academics and grounded in human centred design, learning analytics, and the Technology Acceptance Model, the dashboard supports sensemaking rather than reporting. Survey evidence and case examples illustrate how cohort visibility has informed reflective curriculum design, supported student transitions, and enabled inclusive teaching decisions, while also identifying challenges and future directions for institutions seeking meaningful pedagogical impact from analytics.

04D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Embodying Academic Skills through Practice-Led Actor Training for Holistic Learning (PATH)

Fiona Gentle
Excelsia University College

PATH offers a fresh approach to Academic Skills Learning by drawing on actor training to create more embodied, inclusive and memorable learning experiences. This session introduces PATH – Practice-led Actor Training for Holistic Learning – an embodied and experiential approach developed within an Academic Skills program. Drawing on actor pedagogy, PATH uses practical activities to help students engage with learning in more active, memorable and meaningful ways. Grounded in research on embodied and experiential learning, this approach recognises that students learn through the whole person: cognitively, physically, emotionally and relationally. Student evaluation data of the project, suggests strong impact in the areas of engagement and retention. Rather than positioning academic skills as abstract or purely cognitive, PATH offers strategies for anchoring learning in lived experience, supporting deeper engagement, understanding and memory. This session will share the rationale, design and early outcomes of PATH, and consider how embodied actor-training techniques may offer a cross-disciplinary approach to more inclusive, energising and student-centred instruction alone.

04E EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

Keeping the cup full: A case-based discussion on how a regional university's learning advising team manages vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout to ensure effective student support

Sarah Irvine, Melanie Downs, Kacie Fahey
UniSO

Higher Education Institution (HEI) educators experience vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout, but their experiences are often under-investigated and under-supported (Goode, 2022). Many HEI staff are a safe-space and confidant for students; they provide informal wellbeing support beyond the formal supports available via university counselling teams. This exposure to student trauma is taking a toll on staff physical, emotional, and psychological wellbeing (Cordaro et al., 2024). Knowing that traumatic experiences are more common in marginalised communities because of communal, systemic trauma (Gómez et al., 2021), and that the Australian Universities Accord Final Report (Department of Education, 2024) is helping to widen the participation of marginalised cohorts, it is now more important than ever for HEI staff to have effective solutions for managing vicarious trauma, compassion fatigue, and burnout. This emerging initiative explores the solutions developed by UniSQ's Student Learning Advising team to address these issues.

NOTES

TUESDAY

CONFERENCE INFO P. 06-11	PROGRAM P. 13-35	PARALLEL SESSIONS 1-4 P. 39-61	POSTER SESSIONS P. 65-108	PARALLEL SESSIONS 5-7 P. 109-126	LAUNCHPADS P. 127-136	PARALLEL SESSIONS 8-17 P. 137-199
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STUDENT SUCCESS PANEL

TUESDAY 30 JUNE 2026

8:30AM – 9:30AM

MINYAMA 1 & 2

In 2026, the Student Success Panel is about exploring the value of a university degree and the importance of embedding career development learning – not just in terms of strengthening employment outcomes, but in how university study shapes who you are, the opportunities and connections you build, the capabilities, skills, and mindsets you develop, and the pathways and directions you begin to navigate for your future as a result of the experience.

We often talk about university as a direct pathway to a job, but the reality is far more complex. Careers today are rarely linear – they’re dynamic and evolving. Gen Z students are projected to have up to 16 to 18 jobs across 4 to 7 different career pathways. By 2030, around 39% of tasks in the average job are expected to change or be displaced, and ongoing learning and re-learning will be a central feature of working life.

At the same time, the way people think about careers is shifting. Today’s professionals are placing greater emphasis on mastery, flexibility, and pursuing work that offers purpose and meaning – not just stability or status. So, in the context of these changes – shifting career patterns, evolving skill demands, and changing expectations – how can university study better prepare graduates to navigate their careers across the lifespan? Not just to secure a job at graduation, but to build and sustain careers that are adaptable, meaningful, and fulfilling over time.

Host



William Wragg
Senior Manager
Career Education & Inala University Study Hub (IUSH)
| Support for Learning
UniSQ

William Wragg is a career development and equity practitioner and educational leader, motivated by a commitment to supporting individuals and communities to craft and sustain meaningful lives. His practice centres on purpose, meaning, wellbeing, and equity. He prides himself on designing holistic, integrated learning solutions, as well as counselling and coaching approaches informed by his broad curiosities. William also has a strong interest in leadership, with a passion for leading teams through vulnerability, and with health, happiness, and empathy as central tenets.

POSTER PROGRAM

POSTER PROGRAM

Poster	Title	Authors and Institutions	
Poster 01 Students	From Passive Submissions to Active Collaboration	Dr Pantea Aria, Dr Majid Malekpour <i>UNSW College</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 02 Success	Enhancing mathematics teaching and learning using STACK	Mr Ipitagama Indika, Dr Zora Rad, Dr Ganesha Weerasinghe, Dr Nimal Pinnawala <i>MC</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 03 Success	Supporting Student Learning under Uncertainty: Insights from Early Practice	Professor Chung-Hui Liang, Ms You-Syuan Huang, Ms Yu-Wen Shao <i>NYCU</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 04 Success	A framework of sense of belonging in higher education	Dr Sarah Walker, Dr Lillian Smyth <i>ANU</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 05 Transitions	By students, for students: transforming first-year onboarding through co-design	Ms Juliet Shoebridge <i>UTS</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 06 Students	Weaving confidence and care: Intertwining trauma informed practice with self-efficacy and Enabling Program pedagogies	Ana Larsen <i>CQU</i> Amy Cloughton <i>Federation University</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 07 Success	Inclusive teaching toolkit: Supporting sector-wide implementation of best-practice inclusive teaching and learning	Dr Katie Osborne-Crowley, Mary Teague, Harriet Ridolfo <i>UNSW</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 08 Success	Bridging the Gap from Risk to Success	Mr Isaac Howell, Mr David Hurlow, Ms Zoe Wang <i>UTS College</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 09 Transitions	From 'I got in!' to 'I belong here': Mentoring that makes the difference	Chelsea Muir, Caroline O'Farrell <i>UQ</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 10 Transitions	FYE Working Group: Supporting Transition, Engagement, and Retention	Dr May El Haddad, Ms Tara Gamble, Dr Ben Turner, Dr Loretta Anderson, Dr Rob Buhmann, Ms Victoria Hinkley, Ms Nicolette Bannink, Dr Karina Rune, Dr Louise Capling, Ms Rebecca Macdonald <i>UniSC</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 11 Students	Factors for University Students' Sense of Belonging	Mr David Cui, Dr Abi Brooker <i>UOM</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER

Poster	Title	Authors and Institutions	
Poster 12 Students	The Support Team Showcase series - supporting First Year Unit Coordinators in the third space	Monica Harrower <i>Murdoch University</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 13 Transitions	Going "Back" to the Future: Reimagining Assessment and Feedback through Process Pedagogy in a Pathway College First Year Writing Unit	Mr Rajesh Krishnamuti, Mr Andre Crozier <i>Monash College</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 14 Transitions	"If you never talk to students, nothing is going to change": Listening to the student voice to change university transition support	Miss Isabella Sauchelli, A/Prof Elissa Pearson, Dr Amanda Richardson, A/Prof Claire Aitchison, Dr Eden Thain <i>AU</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 15 Success	Building belonging through advising: a novel approach to student success in pathway programs	Ms Aretha Zygouri <i>UNSW College</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 16 Students	Mutual Learning in Action: How Peer Leaders and Tutors Co-Create Supportive First-Year Learning Environments	Dr Amanda Richardson, Mr Joel Fowler <i>AU</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 17 Students	Building in-person connections in an online world	Sarah Scholz, Abi Brooker <i>University of Melbourne</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 18 Students	Supporting International Student Wellbeing	Rebecca Natalizio <i>headspace National</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 19 Success	Beyond Diagnostic Language Assessment: Driving Student Success through Integrated ALSA-Faculty Partnerships at Monash University	Dr Yeni Karlina, Dr Farzana Khan <i>Monash University</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER
Poster 20 Transitions	The BBB Psychology Honours Workshop Series: An initiative to connect with and support undergraduate researchers	Miss Isabella Sauchelli, Mr Jacob Sevastidis, Miss Melissa Ngo, Miss Louise Trudgett-Klose, Miss Annaliese Anesbury <i>AU</i>	VIEW PAPER VIEW POSTER

POSTER 01

STUDENTS

From Passive Submissions to Active Collaboration

Dr Pantea Aria, Dr Majid Malekpour
UNSW College

This poster presents a redesigned assessment model in a first-year computing course aimed at improving student engagement and reducing inappropriate use of generative AI. Traditional online submission-based assessments had led to passive learning, lower attendance, and increased reliance on AI-generated solutions with limited conceptual understanding. In response, a blended assessment approach was introduced, combining collaborative in-person laboratory work with individual accountability.

The revised model allocated 70% of laboratory marks to group activities and presentations, and 30% to individual written reports. Students worked in small groups on hands-on programming tasks and delivered short presentations, encouraging peer learning, critical thinking, communication, and real-time feedback. The structure promoted active participation and made it more difficult for students to rely solely on AI-generated content.

The model was piloted across three terms with cohorts of approximately 150 students each. Results showed improved laboratory attendance, higher student engagement and satisfaction, and stronger confidence in learning. Students particularly valued the collaborative environment and immediate feedback. Importantly, suspected cases of AI-generated or plagiarized work decreased significantly, suggesting a positive impact on academic integrity and authentic learning.



From Passive Submissions to Active Collaboration

1 Background

- In previous terms, students submitted weekly lab solutions online for marks.
- Many relied heavily on AI tools, copying answers without understanding.
- Attendance and engagement declined, and final results suffered.

2 Our New Approach

- Weekly marks are now split between online submissions and in-lab group work.
- In each lab, students are randomly grouped and given one question to solve together.
- Groups share their findings through short presentations, sparking peer learning and discussion.

Impact and Benefits

- Peer Collaboration and Communication Skills**
By presenting to their peers, students practise explaining their reasoning, defending their solutions, and learning from other groups' approaches. This builds teamwork and communication skills that are valuable beyond the classroom.
- Reduced Reliance on AI Copy-Paste**
The group setting makes it harder to simply copy answers. Students engage with the material, ask questions, and apply knowledge themselves, leading to genuine skill development.
- Active, Hands-On Learning**
Instead of passively submitting solutions found online, students actively work through problems together. This encourages critical thinking, problem-solving, and deeper understanding of concepts.
- Immediate Feedback and Shared Ideas**
During presentations and discussions, students receive instant feedback from peers and staff. They are exposed to different problem-solving strategies, broadening their perspective and reinforcing key learning outcomes.
- Increased Attendance and Engagement**
Students now have a reason to come to labs because part of their marks depend on in-person participation. Attendance has improved, and students are more attentive and involved during sessions.

8 How We Assess It

For every weekly lab (15% total marks)

- 30%** of the lab mark is from the group presentation activity.
- 70%** of the lab mark is from the individual submission.

Future Plan
We intend to increase the weight of the presentation component as students become more confident and collaborative.

9 Conclusion

- Shifting from passive submissions to active group work has created meaningful engagement and genuine learning. Attendance has improved, reliance on AI-generated answers has decreased, and students are developing stronger problem-solving and communication skills.
- This simple change has proven that, with the right structure, labs can be more than assessments — they can become powerful learning experiences.

References

Dr Pantea Aria | Dr Majid Malekpour

UNSW College

POSTER 02
SUCCESS

Enhancing mathematics teaching and learning using STACK

Mr Ipitagama Indika, Dr Zora Rad, Dr Ganesha Weerasinghe, Dr Nimal Pinnawala
MC

This project examines how the STACK Moodle plugin (System for Teaching and Assessment using a Computer Algebra Kernel) enhances student engagement and motivation in two Monash College Diploma mathematics units where the majority of students enrolled are international students. While widely studied in higher education, STACK is under-researched in pathway programs. This study addresses that gap by redesigning some assessments and investigating the use of STACK-based formative assessment tasks in large classes in a Monash College pathway program. Previously, some of the online assessment tasks relied primarily on multiple-choice formats that supported answer recognition and provided only binary correct/incorrect feedback, limiting opportunities for deeper conceptual understanding. The redesigned approach using the STACK Moodle plugin incorporates randomised algebraic input, structured automated process-level feedback targeting common misconceptions, and multiple attempts to support iterative learning. These activities create engagement and confidence which impact retention and success of students.



Enhancing Mathematics Teaching and Learning using STACK

Mr Ipitagama Indika, Dr Zora Rad, Dr Ganesha Weerasinghe, and Dr Nimal Pinnawala

Average scores: Week 7, Week 10, Week 12

How do STACK-based interactive tools and automated feedback improve engagement, performance, and data-informed teaching in pathways mathematics?

Our investigation

- Stacked recent research on STACK plug-in in Moodle
- Systematic literature analysis of online learning
- Investigated engagement in large (100+ students) math classes
- Evaluated real-time, data-informed, and evidence-based practices

Advanced Mathematics

- Stacked recent research on STACK plug-in in Moodle
- Systematic literature analysis of online learning
- Investigated engagement in large (100+ students) math classes
- Evaluated real-time, data-informed, and evidence-based practices

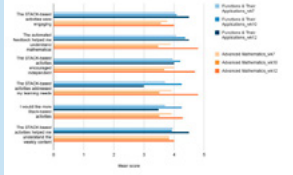
Teacher Reflection

Feedback must be explicit, content-specific.

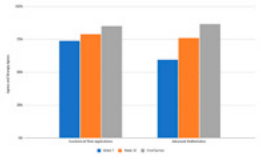
- Clearer instructions on how to input answers improves understanding, student acceptance

Advanced Mathematics

- Stacked recent research on STACK plug-in in Moodle
- Systematic literature analysis of online learning
- Investigated engagement in large (100+ students) math classes
- Evaluated real-time, data-informed, and evidence-based practices



My understanding of the weekly content increased after attempting the STACK-based activities



Student Insights

Challenging in a good way - helpful for figuring things out on my own!

STACK gives me more opportunities to practice practice without feedback...

Trying a similar type of question again was really helpful...



Reference: Atafaleva, M. M., Khushf, D. M., & Lynskey, O. S. (2024). Using STACK to support adaptive mathematics learning in LMS Moodle. In S. Papadakis (Ed.), Professional retraining and life-long learning using ICT: Person-oriented approach 2024 (IL-Person 2024) (CEUR Workshop Proceedings, Vol. 3781, pp. 30-41). CEUR-WS.org. <https://ceur-ws.org/Vol-3781/paper02.pdf>

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POSTER 03 SUCCESS

Supporting Student Learning under Uncertainty: Insights from Early Practice

Professor Chung-Hui Liang, Ms You-Syuan Huang, Ms Yu-Wen Shao
NYCU

Students in flexible, interdisciplinary programs often have greater choice but also experience uncertainty about how to learn and navigate their academic pathways (Kift et al., 2010). Such uncertainty can shape how students make sense of their learning and emerging academic identities. Following the launch of a cross-disciplinary bachelor's program in 2024 at a research-intensive university in Taiwan, a learning support initiative was developed to address students' learning concerns. During the first six months of practice, many students were not seeking clear answers or decisions, but support in understanding their learning experiences and possible next steps. In response, an integrated learning support approach guided collaborative, group-based advising conversations. This approach emphasizes sense-making, structured dialogue, and clear practice boundaries to support consistent practice. While quantitative outcome data are not yet available, qualitative materials inform ongoing reflection. Early insights position academic advising as a pedagogical practice that supports collective sense-making under conditions of uncertainty (Tinto, 2012).

Supporting Student Learning under Uncertainty: Insights from Early Practice

Chung-Hui Liang, You-Syuan Huang* and Yu-Wen Shao
Office of Academic Advising, National Yang Ming Chiao Tung University

*You-Syuan Huang, Academic Advisor | yousyuan@nycu.edu.tw

1 BACKGROUND & CONTEXT

Flexibility brings uncertainty

- Interdisciplinary programs expand student choice
- But also introduce uncertainty in:
 - Learning experiences
 - Academic identity
 - Future direction
- At NYCU, a new Cross-Disciplinary Bachelor Program (2024)**
 - Led to new advising challenges

2 WHAT WE OBSERVED

Students were not seeking answers
Instead, many students:

- Struggled to make sense of their learning
- Felt uncertain about next steps
- Needed support for interpretation, not decisions

This prompted a reconsideration of "academic advising"

3 INTEGRATED ADVISING FRAMEWORK

ABC Model
Guiding principles for understanding student learning challenges

CAPES DJ Framework
Supporting assessment and sense-making in advising conversations

- C:** Career Goals and Interests
- A:** Academic Strengths and Weaknesses
- P:** Personal Circumstances
- E:** Extracurricular Activities, Internship and Studying Abroad
- S:** Support Services
- D:** Degree Requirements
- J:** Job Market Trends

REAPP Process
Structuring advising conversations

Our Basic 2
Clarifying professional boundaries and shared expectations

Academic advising is not only about guiding decisions, but about supporting how students make sense of their learning.

4 KEY INSIGHTS

Early insights from practice

- Advising supports sense-making, not just decision-making
- Shared advising perspectives enhance reflection
- Structured dialogue improves clarity

Based on qualitative data:

- Advising recordings
- Post-session feedback
- Quantitative outcomes not yet available

5 IMPLICATIONS

Reconceptualizing academic advising

- Advising as a student learning support process
- Emphasis on:
 - Sense-making
 - Reflection
 - Ongoing development

**This shifts advising from:
Providing answers → Facilitating learning**

REFERENCES

Kift, S. M., Nelson, K. J., & Clarke, J. A. (2010). Transition pedagogy: A third generation approach to FYE—A case study of policy and practice for the higher education sector. *The International Journal of the First Year in Higher Education*, 1(1), 1–20. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ijfhe.v1i1.13>

Tinto, V. (2012). *Completing college: Rethinking institutional action*. University of Chicago Press.

POSTER 04 SUCCESS

A framework of sense of belonging in higher education

Dr Sarah Walker, Dr Lillian Smyth
ANU

For almost 30 years, sense of belonging has been a focus in higher education research in support of improved student experience and outcomes. Due to the extensive research that has been undertaken, we understand, among other outcomes, it contributes to student persistence and academic outcomes, is positively influenced by targeted interventions and is influenced by several key factors such as campus climate, individual background, and relationships with peers and staff. However, when you compare the concept of sense of belonging to other higher education concepts, such as student retention, the ability to understand the influences and impacts through a model or framework of belonging appear to be less advanced. Modelling and frameworks are useful tools in research and practice to understand the relationship between factors of the concept and practically where levers can be pulled and what interventions can focus on. This poster utilises a literature review approach to presents an initial framework for sense of belonging in higher education for testing and adaptation.



A framework of sense of belonging in higher education

What is sense of belonging?

Sense of belonging has been and remains a focus in higher education. It has become a key element within strategic plans, evaluations, research, and general discussions related to the student experience. Within this work, when we refer to a 'sense of belonging' we are utilising the following definition:

'Students perceived social support on campus, a feeling or sensation of connectedness, and the experience of mattering or feeling cared about, accepted, respected, valued by, and important to the campus community or others on campus' (Strayhorn, 2018, p.4)

What are we missing?

There are key elements related to sense of belonging which we do not yet have.

There is **no shared definition**.

There is **no shared measured**.

There is **no solid model or framework**.

Why are models and frameworks important?

Models and frameworks provided a representation of a concept that can be used to explain, evaluate and test elements of said concept. They help indicate what needs to be measured and where influence can occur.

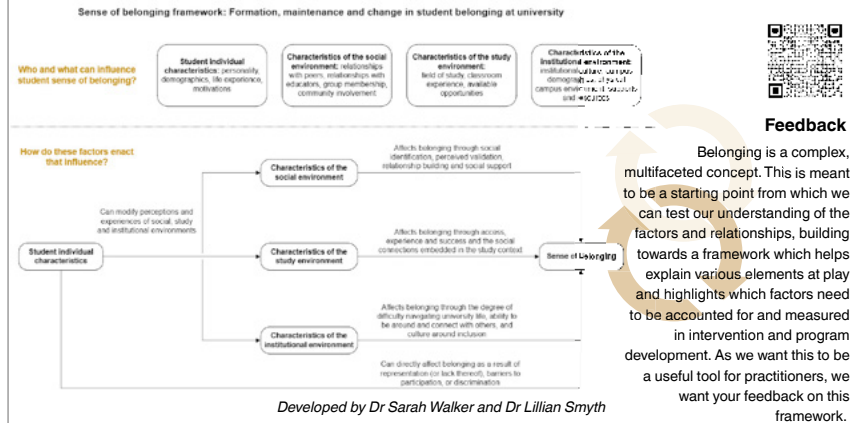
The importance of sense of belonging

Previous research has demonstrated that a sense of belonging is (in no particular order):

- essential to understanding and influencing the student experience, particularly for students from traditionally underrepresented backgrounds;
- related to academic outcomes, including GPA, persistence and graduation;
- positively influenced by targeted interventions;
- in flux over time, requiring ongoing attention and support;
- influenced by several key factors such as campus climate, individual background, and relationships with peers and staff;
- critical within the first year of study.

What we're doing to help

Utilising a literature review approach, we examined research on sense of belonging in higher education over the past 30 years. From this, we categorised the key factors which research has demonstrated are related to sense of belonging. There are many factors associated with sense of belonging including individual's background and characteristics, institutional environment, student experience and engagement, and academic and personal outcomes. We used this to develop a framework of sense of belonging in higher education, presented here.



POSTER 05
TRANSITIONS

By students, for students: transforming first-year onboarding through co-design

Ms Juliet Shoebridge
UTS

Following a significant refresh of UTS's onboarding communications in 2025, the Student Experience team developed *Your Guide to Getting Started at UTS*—an interactive onboarding resource designed to reduce information overload and offer a clear, student-friendly pathway into university life. Written by students for students, the guide was developed through a co-design process shown to enhance inclusion and resource relevance (Omland et al., 2025). The guide presents essential transition information in a visual, mobile-first format, covering preparation for classes, key systems, academic expectations, support services, community initiatives, and core administrative tasks.

This poster outlines UTS's development and implementation of its student-led, interactive onboarding guide, highlighting the co-design approach and integration across orientation and onboarding communications. The poster also examines the accessibility benefits of delivering onboarding information through an interactive digital guide. Features such as text-to-speech, adjustable contrast and focused reading modes reflect best practice in accessible digital design and support inclusive participation in online learning environments (Bong & Chen, 2024).

By students, for students: transforming first-year onboarding through co-design

An interactive digital resource guiding commencing students through student life.
Juliet Shoebridge, Student Experience at University of Technology Sydney.



Problem

Commencing students experienced significant information overload across fragmented onboarding channels, including emails, websites, and events. This lack of clarity reduced early confidence, increased enquiries, and risked attrition prior to census.

"It's easy to miss the important parts because there's so much"
-International postgraduate student

Product

The project delivered an interactive onboarding guide consolidating essential information, links and peer advice in one place. Content spans enrolment, orientation, study, support services and student life, supported by student-created video content.

Designed to work seamlessly on mobile, tablet and desktop.



Adaptive accessibility profiles, navigational adjustments and content adjustments.

References

Bong, W. K. & Chen, W. (2024). Increasing faculty's competence in digital accessibility for inclusive education: a systematic literature review. *International Journal of Inclusive Education* 2024, 28(2), 197–213. DOI: 10.1080/13603116.2021.1937344
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Omland, M., Hontvedt, M., Siddiq, F., Amundrud, A., Hermansen, H., Mathisen, M. A. S., Rudningen, G. & Reiersen, F. (2025). Co-creation in higher education: a conceptual systematic review. *Higher Education*, 90, 1017–1047. DOI: 10.1007/s10734-024-01364-1

Process

Co-design was embedded as the core delivery method, engaging 16 current students from diverse backgrounds, disciplines and study levels. Students identified key pain points in existing communications and collaboratively determined content, tone and format.

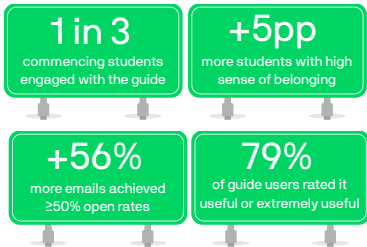
Outputs were developed through iterative workshops, student-authored content and student-led production of video resources.

"The experience built my professional skills while allowing me to contribute student perspectives meaningfully"
-Co-design student participant

Performance

Pre- and post-launch comparisons show the guide reduced information overload and improved onboarding engagement.

The guide streamlined communications and supported inclusive access through use of the built-in translate function used by students for 13+ languages, and adaptive accessibility features.



POSTER 06

STUDENTS

Weaving confidence and care: Intertwining trauma informed practice with self-efficacy and Enabling Program pedagogies

Ana Larsen
CQU

Amy Cloughton
Federation University

Enabling Programs occupy a unique space, providing a pathway for diverse students that would otherwise not have access to higher education. There are higher rates of equity group students, mental health issues, and the impact of trauma among Enabling cohorts. Aiming to improve retention and success, the pedagogies utilized within the Enabling space all include significant levels of pastoral care. Enabling educators face many challenges within this unique space as they navigate emotional labour and attempt to support diverse students. In addition, many Enabling students have also experienced trauma, compounding the difficulties they face in education. Integrating trauma informed practice with Enabling pedagogies could provide a pathway to support diverse student learning and raise self-efficacy. This is not a simple task.

This poster draws on social cognitive theory, which examines the triadic reciprocal relationships between trauma informed practice, fostering self-efficacy and Enabling Program pedagogies. Data was thematically analyses from three former Enabling students who participated in a qualitative pilot study.

The poster displays key points and findings from the case study which ultimately highlight that Enabling Pedagogies already have significant alignment with trauma informed practices and great capacity to improve the student experience and foster self-efficacy.

Weaving confidence and care: Intertwining trauma informed practice with self-efficacy and Enabling Program pedagogies

Enabling Students & Pedagogies

Enabling Programs primary goal is to prepare students regarding study skills, social transition and understanding of the culture of the university. Enabling programs are an equity initiative designed as a pathway to higher education for students with disabilities, who are at risk of not completing college. These students may have not met the entry requirements and have therefore usually had negative experiences in previous education settings (Davis et al., 2023). The literature highlights how negative past experiences commonly result in Enabling students having a negative attitude towards higher education, which is often difficult to overcome. This may lead to one or more marginalised group such as low socio-economic, First Nations, regional or remote and students with a disability (Larsen & Jensen, 2026). Enabling students are also more likely to have previously experienced trauma which can impact their learning. Enabling cohorts are consistently noted as extremely diverse, requiring significant levels of support (Larsen & Jensen, 2026). Enabling Programs are ever-evolving as educators draw on multiple pedagogies to support their students' diverse needs. There is a growing body of literature which highlights that Enabling Pedagogies, while diverse in a sense have many commonalities (Davis et al., 2023). This study elected to use Critical Enabling Pedagogies as defined by Hartam et al. (2024).

Enabling students tend to sit at an intersection of marginalised groups, and their self-efficacy has been shaped by their previous experiences with multiple layers of disadvantage. On top of that, living with the impact of trauma adds a level of complexity that can affect cognitive ability and emotional regulation, leading to fluctuating learning capacity.

Enabling educators balance emotional labor, proactive and responsive teaching strategies, and challenging structural expectations to engage Enabling students. However, the pedagogies used commonly in Enabling Education already encompass many trauma informed practices. This complex intersection is worth reflection to ensure continuous improvement in teaching practices.

Weaving perspectives

Formal feedback

- Feedback strongly shaped self-efficacy through affective states and social persuasion, with emotional responses influencing confidence and learning persistence (Bandura, 1997).
- Strengths-based, relational feedback—grounded in unconditional positive regard—supported belonging, agency and confidence, with students' efforts felt seen and valued (Brunzell & Norrish, 2021).
- Dialogic and scaffolded feedback aligned with enabling pedagogies, helping students reframe challenges and build capability (Hattam, 2024).
- In contrast, deficit-oriented feedback undermined confidence and reinforced negative self-talk, highlighting the importance of consistent, affirming cultural messages in trauma-informed educational contexts (Hattam et al., 2024).

Learning environment

- Supportive, scaffolded environments increased help-seeking, confidence and engagement, reflecting dialogic, student-centred practice central to enabling pedagogies (Hattam et al., 2024).
- Explicit teaching of academic skills and norms reduced uncertainty, enabling students to navigate learning with greater self-efficacy and independence (Hattam et al., 2024).
- Predictable, safe environments encouraged risk-taking and participation, which are critical given trauma's ongoing cognitive and emotional impacts (Brunzell & Norrish, 2021; Howard, 2022; van der Kolk, 2015).
- Flexible, responsive teaching approaches supported diverse needs, fostering trust and reducing fear associated with prior negative educational experiences.

The relational factor

- Trusting relationships → collaboration enhances engagement and self-efficacy through social persuasion and shared learning (Bandura, 1992; Mitchell & Tucci, 2024).
- Consistent, empathetic interactions—such as mentoring and personalised support—created safe spaces that helped students rebuild confidence and reconnect with learning (Brunzell & Norrish, 2021; Howard, 2022).
- Scaffolded, dialogic relationships (e.g., tutors reframing content, peers modelling success) strengthened understanding and persistence (Hartam et al., 2024).
- Over time, relational trust reduced the impact of past trauma, enabling collaboration, belonging, and sustained engagement in education (van der Kolk, 2015).

Reference list.

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Experiences of trauma can bring:

- Physiological changes to the brain (Howard, 2022; van der Kolk, 2014)
- Impacts on explicit (conscious) and implicit (unconscious) memory (Sinason & Conway, 2022)
- Retention and recall challenges
- Emotional dysregulation (Brunzell & Norrhiis, 2021)
- Cognitive processing and executive functioning challenges (Grieve et al., 2014)

Trauma-Informed Practices

- TIP is relational and prioritises safety, collaboration and mutuality; there is a focus on empowerment, voice and choice (SAHMSA, 2014).
- TIP should be institution wide. Examples include:
 - Unconditional Positive Regard – a relational approach which accepts and values students where and as they are (Burrows & Norrish, 2012)
 - Mentor check-in/out – developing a safe place and trusted relationship (Parker, 2002)
 - Collaborative and participatory – practices that bring joint power and purpose

Participant details and stories

Content warning: This research draws on work and lived experiences of participants. Be mindful.

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POSTER 07
SUCCESS

Inclusive teaching toolkit: Supporting sector-wide implementation of best-practice inclusive teaching and learning

Dr Katie Osborne-Crowley, Mary Teague, Harriet Ridolfo
UNSW

This poster introduces the Inclusive Teaching Toolkit, developed by the cross-institutional Start@Uni project team, which positions inclusive pedagogy as central to first-year success. The toolkit supports educators to embed inclusive curriculum and assessment, scaffold academic literacies, normalise help-seeking and create an inclusive learning environment.

The Inclusive Teaching Toolkit includes (1) the open-access, evidence-informed Inclusive Teaching Guide (ITG), co-designed across three universities and launched in 2025, and (2) scalable and adaptable Workshop Resources, including facilitator guides, adaptable slides and participant workbooks, to support the delivery of professional development in inclusive teaching practice across the sector. The toolkit also includes an evaluation framework aligned with the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF) to support universities to evaluate the impact of implementing these resources.

The poster outlines the equity problem driving the initiative and presents the Theory of Change linking inclusive teaching capability to improved student belonging, academic self-efficacy, timely support-seeking, successful transition, and sustained academic success. Attendees will gain insight into scalable approaches for embedding inclusive teaching across disciplines and institutions.

Inclusive Teaching Toolkit

Supporting sector-wide implementation of best-practice inclusive teaching and learning
Dr Katie Osborne-Crowley, Mary Teague and Dr Harriet Ridolfo

The Equity Challenge

Students from underrepresented cohorts often encounter hidden curricula and implicit expectations when entering university, undermining belonging and help-seeking – key predictors of persistence and success. At the same time, many university teachers receive limited preparation in inclusive pedagogy, despite strong evidence that inclusive teaching enhances engagement, belonging and academic outcomes.

The Inclusive Teaching Toolkit is an open-access, evidence-based suite of resources to support educators and institutions to embed inclusive curriculum and assessment, scaffold academic literacies, normalise help-seeking and create an inclusive learning environment.



inclusiveteachingtoolkit.com.au

Explore

What's included



Inclusive Teaching Guide
A research-informed guide that brings together clear principles and practical strategies you can apply in your own teaching context.



Professional Learning Workshops
Two ready-to-deliver 90-minute workshops which build awareness and understanding of inclusive teaching and supports educators to build a plan for implementing evidence-based inclusive teaching practices.



Evaluation Guide
Measure the impact of implementing the toolkit in your institution on student wellbeing and success.



inclusiveteachingtoolkit.com.au

UniReady

Uni Ready is a companion resource to the Toolkit that supports students directly with their academic transition to university. Led by student voice, the five modules offer peer insights into university life, strategies for accessing support, practical study techniques, guidance on assessments and development of critical thinking skills essential for academic success.



Theory of Change

The Inclusive Teaching Toolkit and Uni Ready are underpinned by a joint Theory of Change which articulates the evidence-based mechanisms by which the resources support students from equity backgrounds in their first year of university study.

Short-term outcomes

Understanding

- Teachers understand and value the diversity of their classrooms and the learning needs and strengths of cohorts from underrepresented backgrounds
- Teachers recognise their responsibility for enacting and encouraging inclusive teaching practices
- Teachers recognise teaching strategies they can apply to their context and feel more prepared to do so

Academic literacies

- Teachers understand how to support the development of academic literacies
- Teachers understand how to teach for academic self-efficacy

Academic help-seeking

- Teachers know what academic supports are available to students, how to access them and the importance of normalising help-seeking

Understanding

- Students will develop their understanding of the university learning environment and how it is similar to and different from school
- Students will reflect on their current understanding of university and what they have yet to understand
- Students will reflect on existing learning strengths and how they can be adapted to university

Study skills

- Students will develop their understanding of the importance of effective time management, note-taking and active reading and listening for effective study at university
- Students will recognise and adopt strategies to improve their time management, note-taking active reading and listening and exam preparation techniques

Academic literacies

- Students will be able to identify the different text types they are likely to experience in their chosen discipline and the conventions, characteristics, and expectations associated with them
- Students will develop their understanding of the differences between everyday English and academic English
- Students will feel more familiar with their chosen discipline academic conventions and discourse
- Students will develop their understanding of how to locate critically evaluate sources, use citations, and integrate evidence into written work

Academic help-seeking

- Students will be able identify the various types of academic support available at university
- Students will understand that it is an expectation that all students can use the help
- Students will develop their understanding of the importance of self-reflection skills to their learning process, including seeking appropriate academic support
- Students will increase their confidence in seeking academic support

Medium-term outcomes

Teachers are more prepared to embed inclusive practices and promote student academic literacies, teach for self-efficacy and encourage and normalise help-seeking

Students feel supported, included, and are a member of the wider academic community

Students adjust quickly to the university learning environment

Students feel more confident about meeting university requirements, expectations (learning outcomes, self-efficacy)

Students seek out support when they need it

Impact

Students enjoy university, thrive academically in their first year and beyond and complete their program successfully

Developed by



Sponsored by



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POSTER 08
SUCCESS

Bridging the Gap from Risk to Success

Mr Isaac Howell, Mr David Hurlow, Ms Zoe Wang
UTS College

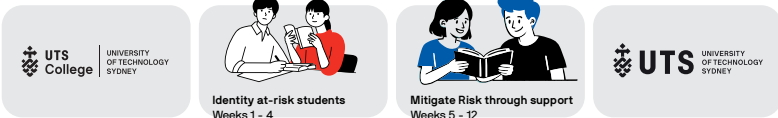
This poster outlines the Early Intervention Model of Support at UTS College, designed to proactively identify and assist students at risk of falling behind. The model operates through an integrated system of digital analytics and human support. It is led by utilisation of the college's Learning Management System analytics and embedded tools such as Dropout Detective to monitor engagement, attendance, and formative assessment submissions in real-time. Key areas covered in the poster are: the Student Success Team; the HELPS Centre, the Academic Success Program, Peer Support Programs and 24/7 digital tools. More specifically the poster will illustrate how these areas work together cohesively in order to enrich the overall student experience.

Bridging the gap from Risk to Success:
The UTS College Early Intervention Model of Support

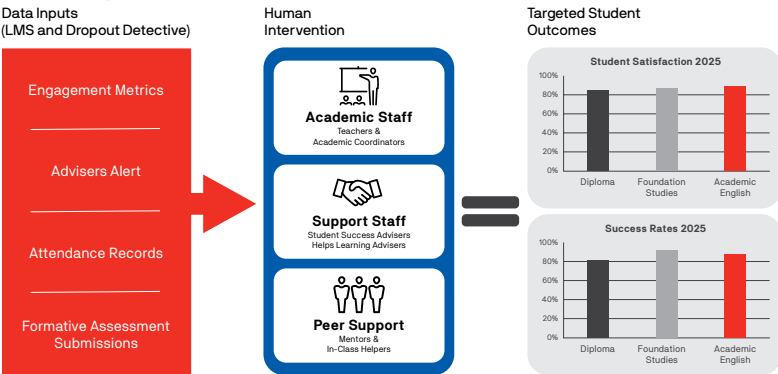
David Hurlow, Isaac Howell and Zoe Wang | Student Support, UTS College

The transition to higher education can be challenging, particularly for students who attend pathway provider institutions. It is widely agreed that a model of early intervention is the best practice in the identification and support of students in order for them to be successful in their studies (Lizzio, 2013). UTS College is the pathway provider for University of Technology Sydney (UTS) and provide Academic English, Foundation Studies, Diploma and Cambridge International A-Levels courses to international and domestic students. The early intervention model of support at UTS College is designed to: identify at-risk students within the first 4 weeks of the study period; mitigate the risk of academic failure and exclusion and empower students using personalised support plans. (Kift, 2009)

1. The Early Intervention Model



2. The Early Intervention Model



3. Implementation Strategy



References

Lizzio, A., & Wilson, K. (2013). Early intervention to support the academic recovery of first-year students at risk of non-continuation. *Innovations in Education and Teaching International*, 50(2), 109-120. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14703297.2012.760867> Kift, S. (2009). *Articulating a transition pedagogy to mobilise and to drive the first-year experience in Australian higher education* [Final Report]. Australian Learning and Teaching Council.



POSTER 09

TRANSITIONS

From 'I got in!' to 'I belong here': Mentoring that makes the difference

Chelsea Muir, Caroline O'Farrell
UQ

Transition into university is a pivotal and often challenging period for commencing students, who must navigate new academic expectations, unfamiliar systems, social adjustment and competing personal responsibilities. These pressures can heighten stress and undermine early engagement, with implications for long term success. Evidence continues to highlight the value of peer support in reducing anxiety and strengthening wellbeing during this phase.

This poster presents a transition journey, illustrating how commencing students engage with UQ's multi modal peer mentoring programs across the early stages of the student lifecycle. It demonstrates how structured, relational peer support enhances preparedness prior to orientation and fosters belonging, resourcefulness and wellbeing throughout the first semester. A distinctive feature of UQ's approach is the provision of pre arrival peer connection. From the moment students accept their offer, trained Student Guides initiate personalised conversations that share insights, answer questions and provide tailored guidance. These early touchpoints help students feel informed, confident and connected before they even set foot on campus. The poster highlights key program design elements, communication strategies and iterative enhancements that respond to the needs of diverse student cohorts. It concludes with program outcomes and practical takeaways, offering a model to support sector wide conversations on strengthening student transition.



THE UNIVERSITY OF QUEENSLAND AUSTRALIA

CREATE CHANGE

From 'I got in' to 'I belong here'

Mentoring that makes the difference

UQ Student Transition Framework

Peer-mentoring programs support multiple stages of the UQ Student Transition Framework, including: Moving into UQ (My Student Guide) • Moving through UQ (Get Set) • Moving beyond UQ

Chelsea Muir
Caroline O'Farrell
Student Enrichment and Success



- Offer received: You're in! Now what?**
Excitement meets uncertainty: students need early clarity and connection.
- Pre-arrival gap: The quiet weeks matter**
Students feel the nerves before they even step on campus, this is where support should begin.
- My Student Guide: Pre-arrival support**
Peer guides answer real questions online, calm nerves, and help new students feel welcome before Orientation.
- Orientation: Space to focus**
Orientation can be an overwhelming time with lots of information to absorb. Peer mentoring in the weeks after can help reinforce and support once classes begin.
- Weeks 1-6: Get Set**
Small groups, friendly discipline-matched mentors, and weekly meet-ups to build belonging and confidence.
- Beyond the program**
"Belonging becomes momentum." Students transition into volunteering opportunities, casual jobs, clubs/ societies and many return as mentors.

A safe space to land
Support for loneliness, questions, and navigating the first weeks of uni life.

A uniquely student-centred approach
Beyond staff and onboarding systems, peer mentoring offers a glimpse into real student life at UQ - helping new students see themselves as part of the community before they begin.

Outcomes
(program statistics from 2025)

My Student Guide

- 663 new students registered in program
- 59 mentors registered in program
- 94.94% of new students said the program made them feel welcome and supported at UQ.

Get Set

- 2245 new students registered in program
- 189 mentors registered in program
- 64.65% of new students said the program made them feel welcome and supported at UQ.

Why peer mentoring?

- Authentic support and student-centred perspectives
- Enhancing belonging at UQ and establishing an active student community
- Enhancing our graduates

CRICOS Provider 00025B • TEQSA PRV12080

POSTER 10
TRANSITIONS

FYE Working Group: Supporting Transition, Engagement, and Retention

Dr May El Haddad, Ms Tara Gamble, Dr Ben Turner, Dr Loretta Anderson, Dr Rob Buhmann, Ms Victoria Hinkley, Ms Nicolette Bannink, Dr Karina Rune, Dr Louise Capling, Ms Rebecca Macdonald
UniSC

Successfully navigating the transition into higher education is a major pedagogical challenge influencing first-year student engagement, belonging, and retention (Kift et al., 2010). These challenges are often intensified in regional universities and health programs, where diverse cohorts, including students from equity backgrounds, may face additional barriers to success (Crawford et al., 2024; Kift et al., 2010). In response, the School of Health at the University of the Sunshine Coast established a cross-disciplinary First-Year Experience (FYE) Working Group to lead school-wide strategies that strengthen transition, engagement, and student success across health programs. Guided by transition pedagogy and collaborative practice, the group advances initiatives in three areas. First, it supports the embedding of the Curriculum of Success framework across first-year courses, integrating six transition capabilities into curriculum and assessment. Second, it promotes proactive engagement through Early At-Risk Intervention and Headstart Engagement initiatives using Canvas analytics and early outreach. Third, it is leading a co-design research project that partners with students to identify evidence-informed, scalable strategies to strengthen belonging, help-seeking, and academic success in regional health education contexts.

First-Year Experience (FYE) Working Group: Supporting Transition, Engagement and Retention

Introduction
The FYE Working Group within the School of Health (SoH) at the University of the Sunshine Coast (Unisc) provides guidance and advice on school-wide strategies and initiatives that support student transition and enhance learning experiences for students in their first year of tertiary study.

The group was formed in December 2023 with cross-disciplinary group membership comprising academic staff from the following health disciplines: nursing, public health, occupational therapy, nutrition and dietetics, biomedicine, psychology, exercise science/physiology, midwifery, and paramedicine.

Executive level support through workload allocation and professional development support for the academic co-lead roles and group members continues to enhance the sustainability and the capacity of the working group to drive key initiatives.

The established terms of reference for the FYE Working Group incorporate 7 values (see image 1), inspired by Kahu and Nelson (2018), which provide a shared vision and underpin all initiatives.

The FYE Working Group continues to support transition, engagement and retention through the implementation of a range of targeted initiatives including: (1) collaboration to embed the Curriculum of Success (CoS), (2) proactive engagement and outreach through the Headstart Engagement and the Early At-Risk Intervention Initiatives, and (3) a co-design research project for future success.

Image 1. FYE Working Group values (Kahu and Nelson, 2018)



1. Collaborating to Embed the Curriculum of Success (CoS)
The CoS supports educators in designing curricula for student success by providing a systematic, evidence-informed framework that articulates the skills and competencies required for effective learning transitions. It comprises six skills and competency domains: Connections, Help-Seeking, Wellbeing, Autonomy, Career Identity and Academic Literacies (Picton and Jaquet, 2024).

Each domain is scaffolded to support student development from early-stage exploration in the first-year through to the development of advanced competencies in later years of study, thereby enhancing engagement, progression, and achievement (Picton and Jaquet, 2024).

The CoS framework aligns strongly with the FYE Working Group values and prompted the establishment and continuation of a partnership between the working group and the Unisc CoS Collaborative (Baker-Andersen et al., 2026). The partnership supports the integration of student success principles and resources into SoH first-year courses. Key activities include CoS training for FYE Working Group members, promotion across SoH disciplines, coordination of CoS Resource Project launch and training for SoH first-year Course Coordinators prior to each study period, and support for staff engagement in curriculum mapping, evaluation, and ongoing feedback to the CoS Collaborative to inform resource development and future directions.

Image 2. Curriculum of Success (Picton and Jaquet, 2024).

2. Proactive Engagement and Outreach
In alignment with the CoS, the FYE working group has developed and implemented two targeted initiatives to foster early engagement, support successful transition to university, and promote student success through proactive outreach, personalised support, and timely intervention. The initiatives aim to support the SoH target of less than 10% attrition and fall rates across all first-year courses.

Early At-Risk Intervention Initiative
Launched in 2024, this initiative provides a structured process for first-year Course Coordinators to monitor student engagement using Canvas Analytics at an individual course level. The process outlines key phases, timeframes, and metrics for Course Coordinators to monitor engagement throughout the study period. A step-by-step guide has been developed to facilitate the process along with templates for Course Coordinators to contact students they identify as 'at-risk' in accordance with the metrics (i.e., student has no resource views, student has no page views, student fails to submit early assignment/assessment task, student receives a fail grade for early assignment/assessment task, or significant decline in engagement for an individual student). Through timely intervention and connection with academic and support services, the initiative seeks to enhance engagement, wellbeing, academic success, and retention.

Headstart Engagement Initiative
Launched in 2025, this initiative is designed specifically to engage the SoH Headstart student population (students in years 10-12 of high school undertaking a university level course). Specifically, the initiative provides a structured process for Course Coordinators to identify and regularly check in with Headstart students and monitor their engagement throughout the study period. This occurs across key phases including an initial welcome, early engagement, mid-trimester break week, and end of trimester engagement. Targeted templates have been developed to enable Course Coordinators to contact and engage with Headstart students within their courses at these specific phases. Through proactive outreach, connection with support services, and monitoring of engagement, the initiative seeks to foster confidence, belonging and academic success while supporting progression into future university study.

"I really appreciate the support and guidance I've received through Headstart. Thank you for checking in regularly and helping me stay focused throughout the program. Your encouragement helped me stay on track and made the transition to university much easier."

3. Co-designing for Future Success
Building on the earlier initiatives, the FYE Working Group was successful in securing Unisc LAUNCH Grant funding for a 12-month pilot project (2026) to explore the following research question: *What are the first-year experiences of undergraduate students from the School of Health and their perspectives on strategies that promote academic success, satisfaction, and retention of first-year students at Unisc?*

This interdisciplinary project uses a sequential mixed-methods design to investigate the first-year experience and transition needs of the SoH students, with particular attention to equity cohorts, to inform the co-design of evidence-informed, student-centred strategies that promote academic success, satisfaction, and retention. Using a co-design approach, the project fosters partnerships between academics, professional staff, researchers, and undergraduate students with lived experience of the first year at Unisc, ensuring that proposed strategies are contextually relevant, inclusive, and responsive to the needs of our students.

The research team have recruited 11 student partners from the SoH Student Representative Advisory Panel to guide the development of a co-design framework and the research process. Phase 1 data collection has commenced incorporating an online survey of SoH students at Unisc using the validated Transition, Wellbeing, Help-Seeking and Adjustment Scale (TWHAS) (Sangapavaru et al., 2019). Phase 2 will commence at the conclusion of the survey and will incorporate follow-up semi-structured interviews and focus groups with students (approximately 30-35 undergraduate students) in collaboration with our co-design partners to further explore perceived successes and challenges and inform the co-design of specific student-centred strategies.

The FYE Working Group will continue to embed and drive new strategies and initiatives developed through the co-design project to enable future success. The team also plans to pursue external grant funding (beyond the pilot project) to enable the scaling of the co-design framework and foster partnerships with regional universities and sector stakeholders to inform broader equity-focused practice and further enable student success.

Image 3. FYE Working Group research project process



Acknowledgment of Country
The University of the Sunshine Coast acknowledges the Traditional Custodians of the land on which we live, work and study. We pay our respects to local Indigenous Elders past, present and emerging and recognise the strength, resilience and capacity of all Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples.

Artwork
Bidjil by Lyndon Davis (Kabi Kabi)
To read more about Unisc's Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander visual identity including the story of this artwork:

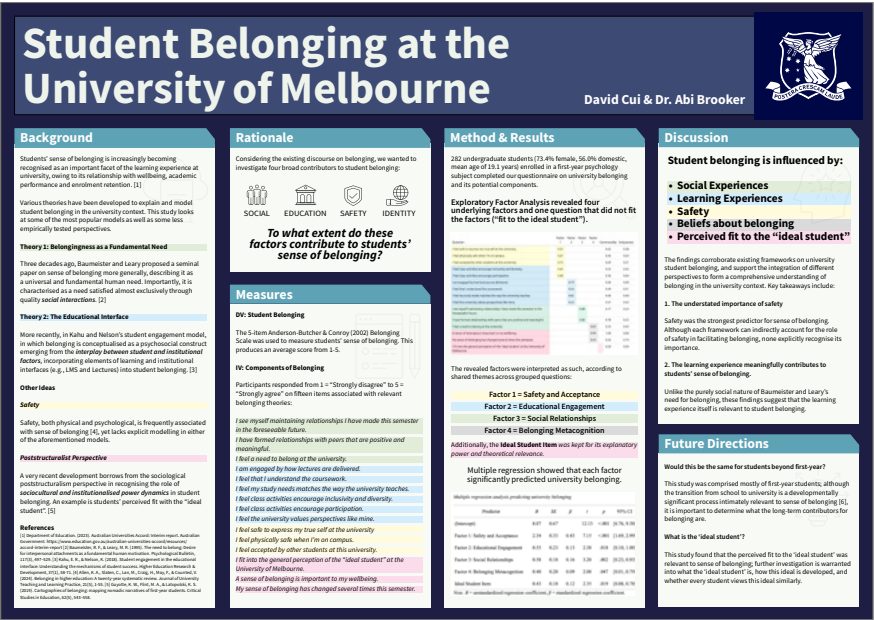


POSTER 11
STUDENTS

Factors for University Students' Sense of Belonging

Mr David Cui, Dr Abi Brooker
UOM

Drawing from Baumeister and Leary's (1995) need-to-belong theory and Kahu and Nelson's (2018) educational interface model, this study addressed two theoretical ambiguities: (1) the context-specificity of university student belonging, and (2) the relative contributions of social connections, learning experiences, safety, and sociocultural dynamics to student belonging. First-year undergraduates (N = 282) at the University of Melbourne completed an online survey measuring university belonging, external belonging, wellbeing, and items reflecting key theoretical components. Hierarchical regression revealed that university and external belonging independently predicted wellbeing with no significant interaction, supporting context-specificity over substitution. Factor analysis identified four factors – Safety and Acceptance, Educational Engagement, Social Relationships, and Belonging Metacognition – alongside a standalone Ideal Student Fit item, all of which significantly predicted university belonging. Safety and Acceptance emerged as the strongest predictor. These findings suggest university belonging is a distinct, context-specific construct shaped by social, educational, safety, and sociocultural factors. Effective models and interventions should therefore extend beyond purely social considerations to address the broader psychosocial conditions underpinning student belonging.



POSTER 12

STUDENTS

The Support Team Showcase series - supporting First Year Unit Coordinators in the third space

Monica Harrower
Murdoch University

Throughout the onboarding and transition period, support services are generally well promoted to commencing students by higher education institutions. However, for those students who do not or cannot engage in orientation or onboarding content and activities, and as classes begin and the inevitable pressures of studying become greater, often assistance is sought from teaching staff, making academics the first point of contact for students in distress (Abrams, 2022), and crucially, the first to notice when support intervention is required.

There is an opportunity here for academics to be support service way finders in pastoral care, as well as academic support - bridging the gap between all services in this cross-boundary third space (Thorpe & Partridge, 2024). As academics often have competing demands such as high volumes of administration, time constraints, casual employment, and a primary focus on curriculum delivery - providing guidance becomes imperative (as well as being an opportunity to gain student preparedness feedback to continuously improve the orientation program).

An initiative was undertaken by Murdoch University to connect support services to First Year Unit Coordinators, learning and sharing information for the betterment of student support and experience, at crucially relevant times. This poster demonstrates the Support Team Showcase webinar initiative.

The Support Team Showcase Series

Supporting First Year Unit Coordinators in the third space

Four Just in Time webinars to enable information sharing and support for First Year Unit Coordinators and all academics.

Webinar	Presenters	Goal
1 Pre-Orientation	Orientation & University Preparation Pathways	Sharing incoming cohort demographics and awareness of high-risk student groups Incoming student journey, challenges, and preparedness of pathways students
2 Pre-Census	Student Success & Learning Support	Setting students up for success, with an intervention and retention focus Learning how to report students considered to be at high-risk
3 Pre-Exam	Student Wellbeing & Access and Inclusion Teams	Sharing the breadth of available support services, for both staff and students Sharing common student concerns/questions/issues
4 Post-Semester on-campus Mini Symposium	Keynote speakers: Academic staff & Professional staff	Sharing of best practice - case studies of innovative teaching practices Speed networking and Support Team Expo, followed by team-building activity

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Student Experience Directorate

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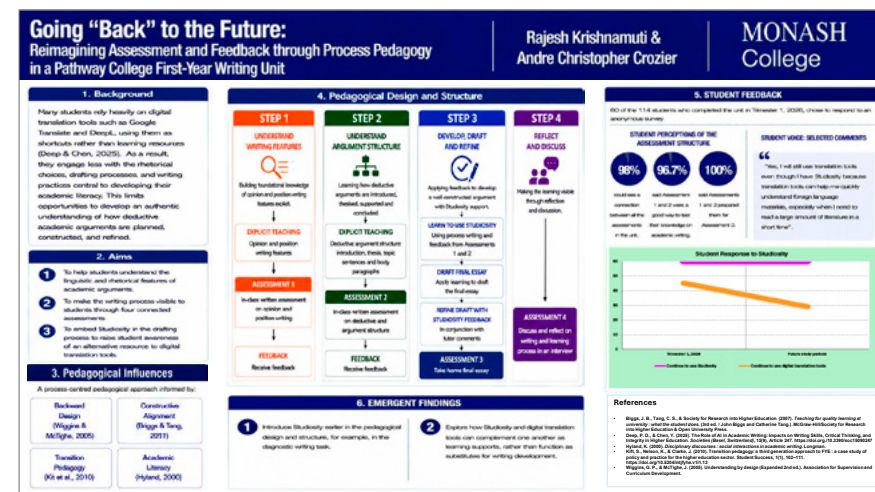
POSTER 13

TRANSITIONS

Going “Back” to the Future: Reimagining Assessment and Feedback through Process Pedagogy in a Pathway College First Year Writing Unit

Mr Rajesh Krishnamuti, Mr Andre Crozier
Monash College

The integration of generative AI into higher education is reshaping how students approach academic writing, creating both opportunities and tensions. This poster presents a redesign journey addressing a key challenge: supporting first-year students to develop academic literacy while AI tools are already embedded in their practices. Concerns around academic integrity, authorship, and learning have intensified, particularly for students transitioning into university, many of whom rely heavily on translation tools as shortcuts rather than supports. Instead of a punitive response, this project adopts an educative approach, positioning AI as a tool for learning when used critically and transparently. The redesign draws on process pedagogy, second language acquisition, and transition pedagogy to shift focus from final products to writing processes. The unit was restructured to emphasise drafting, feedback, reflection, and revision, making writing practices explicit. Assessment tasks were redesigned to teach the linguistic and rhetorical features of deductive arguments. Guided activities, Studiosity, and consultations supported students in reducing reliance on AI, while also encouraging them to critically evaluate and reshape AI-generated text. Findings from surveys, assessments, and observations indicate increased engagement, stronger awareness of academic integrity, and more thoughtful, transparent use of AI in writing.



POSTER 14

TRANSITIONS

"If you never talk to students, nothing is going to change": Listening to the student voice to change university transition support

Miss Isabella Sauchelli, A/Prof Elissa Pearson, Dr Amanda Richardson, A/Prof Claire Aitchison, Dr Eden Thain
AU

First-year university transition experiences impact student belonging (Kahu et al., 2022) and success (TEQSA, 2020). Without sufficient support, students are at risk of attrition (TEQSA, 2020) and declines in wellbeing and success outcomes. Transition pedagogy highlights the need for a whole-of-institution approach (Kift et al., 2010), however initiatives may lack institution-wide alignment and visibility, reducing their ability to enhance first-year students' experiences. Successful first-year programs can be developed by partnering with students (Greenfield et al., 2013), and the Department of Education notes (2024, p. 16), "[i]t is time to listen to what students are saying and to respond genuinely to their calls for change". This poster includes work from a PhD focused upon enhancing university transition support with contemporary students for future students. In this study we interviewed 9 participants from the 2025 cohort of first-year students within the Justice & Society unit of the University of South Australia (UniSA). Students were also preparing for their transition to the new Adelaide University, a merger between UniSA and the University of Adelaide. This poster details students' (a) experiences, belonging, and recommendations for change across their first year of university, and (b) experiences of preparing to transition to a new, merged university.

Background

- First-year university transition experiences impact student belonging (Kahu et al., 2022) and success (TEQSA, 2020)
- Without sufficient support, students are at risk of attrition (TEQSA, 2020) and declines in wellbeing and success outcomes
- Transition pedagogy (Kift et al., 2010) highlights a need for a whole-of-institution approach, however initiatives may lack institution-wide alignment and visibility, impacting first-year students' experiences
- Successful first-year programs can be developed by partnering with students (Greenfield et al., 2013)

Methods

- 9 first-year students from the 2025 Justice and Society cohort at the University of South Australia
- Repeated 1-hour interviews across June-December 2025
- Transcripts analysed via an interpretivist lens by way of reflexive thematic analysis (Braun et al., 2022)

Preliminary Findings

- Shared sense of transition information overload
- Many transition initiatives available, though not easily visible
- Initial social connections easy to make, though meaningful connections more challenging to foster
- Student recommendations included further information spread out across the year, targeting shared (e.g., assessments) and individual (e.g., living arrangements) context-based needs
- Limited or conflicting information made navigating through the merger confusing; however, both staff and student connections helped buffer against these stressors

Emerging Conclusions

First-year students may need:

- (1) A multi-pronged transition information strategy spread out across the year, both within and across foundational courses to increase visibility and timeliness of initiatives
- (2) More explicit assessment support in classrooms, and
- (3) Increased opportunities across the year to make meaningful connections with both peers and staff to foster belonging

"If you never talk to students, nothing is going to change"

Listening to the student voice to change university transition support

Isabella Sauchelli

Supervisors: A/Prof Elissa Pearson, Dr Amanda Richardson, A/Prof Claire Aitchison, Dr Eden Thain



This research was supported by an Australian Government Research Training Program (RTP) Scholarship.

POSTER 15
SUCCESS

Building belonging through advising: a novel approach to student success in pathway programs

Ms Aretha Zygouri
UNSW College

Belonging is a key driver of student engagement, persistence, and academic success. Particularly within time-constrained pathway contexts, belonging must be intentionally embedded in structured, relational everyday practices. In T3 2025, UNSW College implemented a relationship-centred advising initiative within the Domestic Outreach Trial. Grounded in Adlerian Individual Psychology, the project reconceptualised advising from problem-solving to capability-building, using encouragement, connection, and collaborative goal-setting to strengthen student agency and self-efficacy. The initiative, based on a practitioner action-research framework, engaged 31 Domestic Diploma students (100+ interactions delivered through appointments and outreach). Based on this 5-step, 5-minute micro-interaction model, findings indicate positive shifts, namely increased confidence, reassurance, and connection, alongside enhanced help-seeking and follow-through. Observable changes include clearer recognition of effort, stronger strategy generation, and greater readiness to act, with indicative outcomes of 71% subject pass rates and 90.3% re-enrolment (descriptive, not causal). The model demonstrates how brief, intentional micro-practices build belonging in real time. Its low-threshold, repeatable design supports scalability across advising and support contexts, while complementary use of AI enhances consistency and reinforces the importance of human relational presence.

Building Belonging Through Advising

A Novel Approach to Student Success in Pathway Programs

Aretha Zygouri, Student Progress Adviser, Student Success – UNSW College

INTRODUCTION

Belonging is a powerful predictor of student engagement, persistence, and academic success (Strayhorn, 2018; Kahai & Nelson, 2018), particularly for pathway students navigating heightened transition and uncertainty. In T3 2025, the Domestic Outreach Trial at UNSW College introduced a relationship-centred advising approach, presenting a five-step, five-minute model grounded in Alfred Adler's tenets. The initiative focused on fostering belonging through intentional micro-practices, embedded in everyday interactions.

The GAP in pathway programs

- Belonging is valued but not systematically operationalised in everyday advising
- Pathway students face compounded transitions
- Limited timeframe to build belonging
- Advising is often reactive, time-constrained, inconsistent

CONTEXT & METHODOLOGY

Context & Participants

- Domestic Diploma 2025 Cohorts: 31 students
- 100+ advising interactions
- Drop-in & Booked Sessions
- Participation via outreach (emails, calls, invites)
- Adviser Collecting Reflective & Post-Interaction Data

Design

Practitioner Action-Research Case Study
(Kemmis, McTaggart, Nixon Action Research Framework)

PLAN → ACT → OBSERVE → REFLECT

Limitations
Single Practitioner, No Control Group, Naturalistic Sample: Less Causal Inference More Ecological Validity.

The IDEA: The Micro-Interaction Model

A 5-step, 5-minute structure that translates Adlerian principles into everyday advising interactions

Principles

- **Adlerian Tenets**
Belonging, Encouragement, Social Interest, Collaborative Goal-Setting.
- **Transition Pedagogy**
Belonging & Engagement as key to first-year success.

Each step translates Adlerian principles into brief, actionable behaviours that build belonging, capability and forward movement in real time.

THE FINDINGS: REFLECTION → PLANNING → ACTION

Progression from relational conditions to behavioural outcomes

Relational / Affective

- Trust building: feeling safe to engage openly and self-doubt
- Reassurance: experiencing reduced anxiety and self-doubt
- Connection: students feel seen and recognised

Cognitive/Behavioural

- Effort recall: students recognise and articulate prior effort
- Strategy generation: identifying and proposing their own next steps
- Action Orientation: shifting from avoiding to taking immediate follow-up actions

Engagement Outcomes

- Help-seeking: willing to access support proactively
- Follow-through: students acting on agreed next steps

➢ 71% passed all subjects
➢ 90.3% re-enrolled
(Note: outcomes descriptive, not causal)

IMPACT AND SCALABILITY

IMPACT +

- LOW THRESHOLD
- SENSE OF SAFETY
- PERCEPTION SHIFT
- ACTION FOCUS

TIME-EFFICIENT **REPEATABLE** **FLEXIBLE** **LOW TRAINING**

SCALABILITY

AI AS RELATIONAL SUPPORT

- ✓ CONSISTENT LANGUAGE
- ✓ REFLECTION PROMPTS
- ✓ FOLLOW-UP SUPPORT

- ✗ LIMITED RELATIONAL DEPTH
- ✗ CANNOT REPLACE PRESENCE, TRUST & BELONGING
- ✗ EQUITY & PRIVACY LIMITS

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POSTER 16

STUDENTS

Mutual Learning in Action: How Peer Leaders and Tutors Co-Create Supportive First-Year Learning Environments

Dr Amanda Richardson, Mr Joel Fowler

AU

Peer-assisted learning programs such as PASS (Peer Assisted Study Sessions) support first-year transition, belonging, and academic confidence. At our university, PASS Leaders have traditionally facilitated co-curricular study sessions and, more recently, have been embedded in Semester 1 classes as part of extended orientation. While early impacts are positive, their role beyond initial transition is underexplored. This project extends the embedded model into a Semester 2 first-year Health course to examine how in-class peer support functions later in the academic year and its benefits for students, peer leaders, and teaching staff.

Using student surveys and interviews with PASS Leaders and tutors, the study found overwhelmingly positive student experiences (93/104 responses), particularly valuing access to peer support during class when unable to attend traditional PASS. Tutors and PASS Leaders described the collaboration as mutually beneficial, with peer explanations offering relatable perspectives and leaders developing confidence and pedagogical skills. Students reported greater comfort approaching PASS Leaders, suggesting reduced participation barriers beyond orientation. These findings highlight the continued importance of peer connection and demonstrate the value of embedded peer support in Semester 2 contexts.

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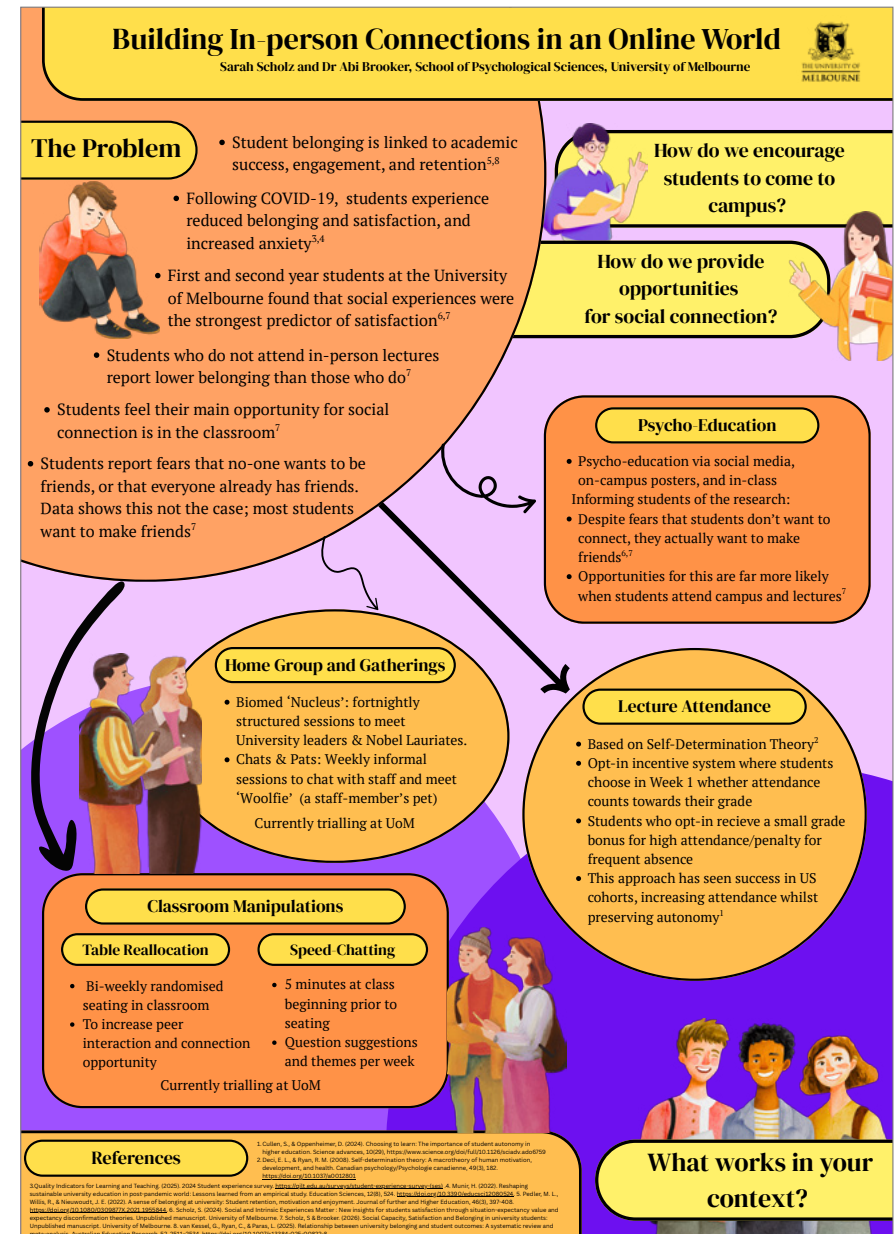
POSTER 17

STUDENTS

Building in-person connections in an online world

Sarah Scholz, Abi Brooker
University of Melbourne

Student belonging is closely associated with academic performance, retention and engagement. However, belonging and in-person engagement continues to be an issue for universities, especially for disciplines dependent on full or partial in-person education. The rapid shift to online learning during the COVID-19 pandemic enabled learning continuity, but also contributed to declines in student belonging, satisfaction, and increases in student anxiety. Since then, universities have grappled with challenges in fostering meaningful in-person engagement, especially within large undergraduate cohorts. There is an increasing recognition that no single approach to student belonging is universally effective because each teaching context has its own ecosystem (resources, needs, strengths, rules, governance). This poster presents five case studies designed to enhance student belonging by increasing students' physical presence on campus, strengthening peer and institutional connection. Our strategies are embedded in Self-Determination Theory, psycho-education principles and cost-benefit analyses. They include pre-class informal activities, structured in-class peer interaction, targeted communication strategies, and evaluation through scholarship of teaching and learning. They are intended to promote discussion about successful strategies in different contexts.



POSTER 18
STUDENTS

Supporting International Student Wellbeing

Rebecca Natalizio
headspace National

International students are a vital part of the Australian higher education sector, yet many experience additional stressors that can impact their wellbeing, engagement, and sense of belonging. These may include visa and financial pressures, language barriers, cultural adjustment, and reduced access to familiar support networks.

This poster presents the development and delivery of Real Talk: University staff supporting international student wellbeing, a capability-building session developed through the University Support Program with headspace National Youth Mental Health Foundation. The session was informed by the Real Talk: A conversational approach to supporting international students with their mental health resource, developed in consultation with colleagues across headspace National to support alignment with broader mental health supports available to international students.

The poster explores the theoretical frameworks underpinning the session, including cumulative stress, acculturative stress, and cognitive load, alongside practical strategies that support early intervention and compassionate conversations. It also introduces the “NIP it in the Bud” framework (Notice, Inquire, Provide), a practical approach designed to help university staff recognise, respond to, and support students experiencing distress.

supporting international
students' mental health
and wellbeing



unique challenges for
international students

Australia is one of the leading study destinations worldwide, where international students represent nearly one in three university students (Universities Australia, 2022). When international students arrive in Australia, they often bring with them significant ambitions, making their home away from home to pursue their education and experience a different way of life. In turn, Australian communities are enriched by their diversity. Yet many international students face unique and disproportionately difficult challenges compared with the domestic student cohort. International students are also less 'less likely to access support' to 'face more barriers to accessing culturally appropriate support' (Orygen, 2020).

Like other immigrants, international students face unique challenges in their day-to-day lives. Studying abroad can bring many adjustment challenges. Some of these include the reality of living abroad not meeting expectations, academic pressures, housing stress, and navigating a new healthcare system and educational setting (Orygen, 2020).

There are many who also grapple with language barriers and new cultural norms. Social difficulties are common, including social isolation, homesickness, loss of interpersonal contacts, poverty, discrimination and prejudice (Utah and Francis, 2022). International students may also face unique hardships financially, as work rights limit their earning capacity and leave many at risk of exploitation or wage theft (Clibborn, 2021). These challenges do not exist in isolation, they can add up, and with each additional stressor comes additional risk to their wellbeing. As a result of these compounded challenges, students may face increased levels of anxiety, depression, and stress, as well as academic underperformance or incompleteness of study. In severe cases, these mental health issues can contribute to more serious consequences like substance abuse or suicidal ideation (Li, Wang, and Xiao, 2021). University staff provided feedback through workshop evaluation surveys and the University Support Program Sector Advisory Group that there was a need for additional resources and training to enhance university staff response in supporting international students.



headspace partner with
international students
and universities

The headspace University Support Program partnered with headspace Camperdown, headspace Multicultural Practice Team, headspace Youth National Reference Group, and the University of Sydney in the development of the Real Talk: A conversational approach to supporting International Students with their mental health – A quick-reference guide for Australian University staff. The resource was launched and distributed at the University of Sydney 2024 International Student Roundtable that was delivered in partnership with headspace Camperdown. The Roundtable had over 100 attendees and the agenda included headspace Youth National Reference Group member Jhalak Arora facilitating an international student Q & A panel and sharing her lived experience.

The headspace University Support Program developed the Real Talk: supporting International Students resource into an educational workshop. The workshop was first delivered at the Australian New Zealand Student Services Association Tertiary Education Roundtable on International Student Mental Health that was hosted at Bond University in 2025. Following this, Charles Darwin University, Macquarie University, Monash College, Murdoch University and the University of Tasmania separately partnered with the University Support Program to deliver nuanced versions of the workshop to their staff that included their student services speaking on local supports and referral pathways for their respective universities. A further 30 international student educational workshops have been delivered to university staff from across Australia with another five universities having their own nuanced workshops.



headspace growing
together with the
higher education sector

headspace is growing together with the university sector in supporting international students. Over 800 university staff attended a headspace Supporting International Students with their Mental Health workshop. The international student resource has been distributed across multiple networks to university staff. headspace Camperdown and the University of Sydney have delivered three international student roundtables/symposiums that included collaboration with headspace National and had over 300 attendees in total.



The Real Talk
international student
resource

The Real Talk: A conversational approach to supporting International Students with their mental health A quick-reference guide for Australian University staff resource can be downloaded from the headspace University Support Program webpage. Centres can reach out to the University Support Program if they wish to collaborate with their local universities.

Here is a link to the
quick reference guide:



please feel free to contact the
headspace University Support Program:
universitysupport@headspace.org.au

Program
Evaluation
Snapshot



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POSTER 19

SUCCESS

Beyond Diagnostic Language Assessment: Driving Student Success through Integrated ALSA-Faculty Partnerships at Monash University

Dr Yeni Karlina, Dr Farzana Khan
Monash University

This poster presents ALSA (Academic Language Skills Analysis), a post-entry language assessment initiative at Monash University where integrated faculty partnership is at the heart of its development and delivery. This poster highlights three case studies of ALSA-faculty collaborations: Pharmacy (collaborative design), Law (bespoke intervention), and Arts (in-class embedding). The effectiveness of this initiative is evidenced by a significant increase in uptake of ALSA and follow up support in these faculties. By embedding the diagnostic within the students' core learning environment, ALSA becomes a collaborative entry point for first-year student transition and success.

BEYOND DIAGNOSTIC LANGUAGE ASSESSMENT

Driving Student Success through Integrated ALSA-Faculty Partnerships at Monash University

Authors

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Affiliations

Student Academic Success (SAS), Monash University

What is ALSA

- The Academic Language Skills Analysis (ALSA) is a short, non-graded diagnostic quiz designed to assess key academic literacy and critical thinking skills, including comprehension of academic texts, interpreting vocabulary in context, and applying grammatical and structural knowledge.
- ALSA was developed collaboratively by academic language specialists within SAS, learning designers, and faculty partners. The assessment is informed by the CEFR framework, which guided both the design of the questions and the benchmarking of student performance.

Faculty of Pharmacy and Pharmaceutical Sciences (PPS): Collaborative design

- The Model: SAS Learning Advisers and PPS academics co-developed the PPS ALSA quiz using pharmaceutical literature.
- This ensures the disciplinary relevance of the texts and vocabularies being tested.
- This also ensures students encounter the 'voice' from the profession early on.
- **Impacts:**
 - ALSA is now embedded in four core units across the first year undergraduate and graduate programs, with 865 students completing the analysis in Semester 1, 2024.
 - 25% of students completing ALSA also engage with SAS academic services.

Faculty of Law: Bespoke intervention

- **The Model:** Following the diagnostic, SAS Learning Advisers provide data-informed assessment workshops co-designed with Low academics.
- **Impacts:**
 - The delivery of high impact intervention within three first term core units for JD and LLM programs with over 400 students completing ALSA.
 - Co-development and delivery of three assessment-related workshops each term which provide students with discipline specific support.

Conclusion and what's next

- By embedding the diagnostic within the students' core learning environment, ALSA becomes a collaborative entry point for first-year student transition and success.
- Moving forward, we aim to monitor ALSA student engagement with SAS services. With this data, we aim to identify cohort needs and collaborate with Faculties to provide more scalable and targeted support initiatives.

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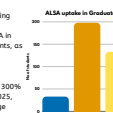
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Acknowledgements

We would like to acknowledge the Student Academic Success team at Monash University who have each individually contributed to the development and ongoing success of ALSA. We also would like to acknowledge our Faculty partners who have collaborated with us and supported the success of ALSA.



POSTER 20

TRANSITIONS

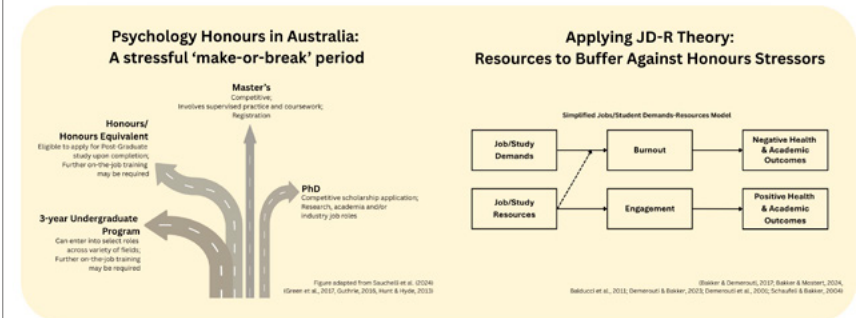
The BBB Psychology Honours Workshop Series: An initiative to connect with and support undergraduate researchers

Miss Isabella Sauchelli, Mr Jacob Sevastidis, Miss Melissa Ngo, Miss Louise Trudgett-Klose, Miss Annaliese Anesbury
AU

We have observed an increase in stress and social isolation among Psychology Honours (PsychHons) cohorts over the years. At the University of South Australia (UniSA), PsychHons students complete a research thesis alongside compulsory coursework, requiring student proactivity and resilience. While postgraduate study is the majority goal for psychology students (Jarrad et al., 2019), program positions in Australia are limited and have competitive entry requirements (i.e., first-class honours). This academic pressure marks PsychHons as a stressful 'make-or-break' period, with students reporting psychological distress and poor wellbeing (Cruwys et al., 2015; Jarrad et al., 2019). Sufficient social support can be a protective factor (Cruwys et al., 2015), including support from graduate researchers (GRs; i.e., PhD students). GR-PsychHons peer mentoring programs provide additional support, enabling students to adjust to new study demands and foster a sense of belonging (Khoo et al., 2019). Therefore, we created an initiative for PsychHons students to: (a) foster a sense of community, (b) support student wellbeing, and (c) help students prepare for their thesis. In collaboration with the Behaviour-Brain-Body Research Centre and Psychology academics, we delivered four extracurricular workshops to the 2025 UniSA PsychHons cohort. This poster includes an overview of the workshops, with facilitator observations and reflections.

The BBB Psychology Honours Workshop Series: An initiative to connect with and support undergraduate researchers

Isabella Sauchelli, Jacob Sevastidis, Melissa Ngo, Louise Trudgett-Klose, & Annaliese Anesbury
School of Psychology, Adelaide University



2025 UniSA Psychology Honours Project Timeline



Workshop Designs

- 2hr in-person workshop
- Created and facilitated by GRs and academic staff
- Interactive content
 - Delivery of information relevant to their research
 - Open discussion with students
 - Foster connections among students
 - End of workshop wellbeing check-ins
- Workshops as a social resource, job/information resource, and personal well-being resource to buffer effects of job demands

GR Facilitator Observations

- Workshops allowed students to connect beyond limited opportunities in compulsory Honours courses
- Workshop content was helpful and eased anxieties
- Students gained additional feedback and resources

GR Facilitator Reflections

- Connecting with Honours students, fellow GRs and experienced academics
- Advancing our own research knowledge and skills
- Creating this series - decreasing feelings of powerlessness and enacting positive change
- Time consuming volunteer work
- Putting ourselves forward as support for Honours students is (somewhat) mentally taxing



See our references, provide feedback or join GRIN here!



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10:30AM - 11:00AM
PARALLEL SESSION

05

05A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Successful school to university transition: A case study of embedded academic support in the Accelerated Pathways Program

Gail Heinrich, Nichola Hoffmann, Kim Cole, Ellen Lassman
UC

The embedded academic and peer-led support provided by Study Skills in the Accelerated Pathways Program at UC is a unique way of delivering effective transition support for secondary school students who are also studying at university. In collaboration with teaching staff, this support includes early orientation to the university environment, interactive in-unit sessions focused on academic skill building, the inclusion of key digital learning support and the integration of peer learning. This approach reduces student uncertainty around academic expectations, provides a sense of community and belonging, and delivers structured, contextual, academic skill development that has applications to both their secondary and university study. This model effectively addresses the transition and student success challenges for this targeted cohort and provides a framework for similar pathway programs within the tertiary sector.

05B EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

What is student voice really worth? Insights from SVA's National Student Voice Reward and Recognition Survey

Ms Belinda Brear
Student Voice Australasia

Ms Lisa Connolly
UniSQ

Student recognition is a critical yet often overlooked element of effective student voice and engagement practice. This Emerging Initiative shares insights from Student Voice Australasia's 2025 National Student Voice Rewards and Recognition Survey, the first Australian scan of the ways institutions recognise student voice contributions. The initiative addresses that there is little evidence about how these recognition practices are implemented across institutions. The results of the survey highlights how recognition varies across institutions and identifies emerging models of best practice. Co-led by a working group of staff and students, the survey also models partnership in research design and analysis. The presentation will present the survey findings, provide practical examples of good practice, and discuss opportunities to improve institutional approaches in valuing students' time, expertise, and lived experience.

05C EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

From triggers to risk scores: Scaling human-led predictive analytics to improve online postgraduate retention

Dr Leanne Ngo
La Trobe University

Mr Gustavo Batista
Risepoint

A 2025 pilot across six postgraduate STEM subjects (n = 2,402) achieved 3.6 percentage point reduction in dropout rates using simple Learning Management System (LMS)-based predictive triggers and human-led outreach (Ngo & Batista, 2025). This emerging initiative presents a scalable risk model (0-100) using LMS behavioural data to enable targeted early intervention. The model incorporates multiple engagement indicators to move beyond binary risk classification and supports prioritised outreach where re-engagement is most likely. A tiered, human-centred communication strategy (email, phone, SMS) is retained, positioning analytics as decision support rather than automation. This work demonstrates a practical, transferable approach for operationalising predictive analytics at scale in fully online environments without complex artificial intelligence infrastructure.

05D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Embedding Wellbeing in Enabling Curriculum: A strengths-based initiative

Amy Williams, Dr I-Lien Tsay
UTAS

Learning at University, a first semester foundational unit within an enabling program, primarily supports students from equity groups and under-represented cohorts. These students often enter higher education with complex academic and psychological needs that can undermine their early engagement and success. In response, we embedded psychological wellbeing theories and strategies in the unit's core curriculum to recognise wellbeing and academic skills development as equally important. Results have shown positive impacts on student self efficacy, engagement, and academic achievement. This presentation shares insights from the development and delivery of Learning at University and the observed impacts on students and staff. It will also illustrate how normalising wellbeing as part of a core curriculum aligns with key principles of transition pedagogy and provide an opportunity to discuss inclusive teaching practices that support student transition and success.

05E EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

Supporting teachers supporting students at scale

Mr Aaron Baird, Ms Rebecca Denham, Ms Ruth Weeks
USYD

We outline how the University of Sydney implemented aspects of the Support for Students Policy (2025) using the Student Relationship Engagement System (SRES) to identify at risk students and deliver personalised support communications based on student engagement and performance, with results showing improved student outcomes.

The discussion will focus on navigating the tensions that arise from mandating the timing and some of the content of communications while still promoting a teacher-led and unit specific approach to supporting students.

This initiative demonstrates how a system like SRES can be used at scale to provide important personal messages to individual students at key moments of their university journey.

05F EMERGING INITIATIVE

TRANSITIONS

Implementing Coherent Transition Through Systems, Story, and Experience

Liz Beresford, Kim Gray, Dr Kylie Austin, Clotilde Bullen
ECU

In 2025, Edith Cowan University (ECU) presented an Emerging Initiative that re-imagined orientation through a needs-based program logic framework informed by Life Layers knowledge, shared by Whadjuk Noongar Elders. Since then, work has progressed from conceptual redesign into early implementation. Life Layers knowledge has also been extended to frame how students build understanding and meaning across their higher education experience. This submission reflects on the practicalities of implementation at scale, alongside the early steps taken to extend the Life Layers knowledge to support student sense-making. While the work remains ongoing, the insights and emerging practices shared here may be useful in developing relational, whole-of-institution approaches to student transition.

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06A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Transitional frictions: The collision as VET students meet the university

Ana Larsen
CQU

Dr Susan Emmett
FedUni

Students transitioning from vocational education (VET) into university represent an underexamined, marginalised group within Australian higher education. Despite policy recognition of their needs, these learners encounter barriers that affect their self-efficacy, retention and success. This presentation reports on a two-phase study conducted across two regional dual-sector universities to investigate the lived experiences of VET-entry students. To enable both a holistic exploration and an in-depth exploration of the power relations shaping the university experience this work innovatively combines Kahu's student engagement framework (Kahu & Nelson, 2018) with the work of Katartzi and Hayward (2020) who discuss 'transitional frictions.' Findings reveal that VET-entry students face significant challenges related to academic expectations, institutional navigation, and belonging, particularly when entering directly into second year university. Yet students demonstrate resilience, resourcefulness, and strong vocational knowledge that remains undervalued within universities. Findings present opportunities to reframe practice and re-create learning environments where transitional frictions are viewed as catalysts to kindle academic success.

06B EMERGING INITIATIVE RETENTION

GUMOANA x TRM: A Culturally Grounded Exchange Initiative Supporting Māori and Pasifika Student Success

Paige Kemp
Griffith Uni

Tertiary institutions across Australia and Aotearoa New Zealand continue to seek culturally grounded initiatives that enhance belonging, retention, and academic success for Māori and Pasifika students. Research demonstrates that Western educational structures frequently perpetuate epistemological and structural racism, marginalising Indigenous and Pacific learners through deficit framings, misrepresentation, and culturally incongruent pedagogies (Bishop, 1999; Natapu Ponton, 2024). In response, Indigenous and Pacific methodologies—such as Kaupapa Māori, Talanoa, and Teu le Va—have emerged as powerful frameworks that centre relationality, cultural safety, and collective wellbeing (Bishop, 1999; Ponton, 2018). These approaches challenge dominant Western paradigms and reposition Indigenous and Pacific knowledge as legitimate, authoritative, and essential to student success.

06C EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Light-Touch, High-Impact: Ethnographic Outreach Evaluation in Schools

Dr Sarah Lambert
RMIT University

Mr Mark van Bergen, Ms Sally Mitchell
Country Universities Centre - Ovens Murray

Ms Jacqui Boehringer
La Trobe University

In the context of a 2.5 year project to co-design and evaluate a regional Outreach program, we outline a novel data-collection approach that enabled efficient Continuous Quality Improvement (CQI) and Theory-Based Impact Evaluation (TBIE). Led by an experienced qualitative researcher and seeking to avoid traditional student surveys, the team adopted collaborative ethnographic methods to collect data in situ as the outreach workshops unfolded. Learning as the project developed, the team generated robust, persuasive evidence of program quality, impact and partnership development. The methods have since been adopted elsewhere for Years 8–9.

06D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

From isolated initiatives to integrated practice: A collaborative approach to curriculum embedding

Dr Danay Baker-Andresen, Ms Emily Collins, Mrs Rebekah Couper, Mr David Duncan, Dr Sara Hutchinson, Ms Jessica Lane, Mr Graham Matchett
UniSC

Collaborating across university boundaries has a critical influence on student success. Within the literature, this is described as third space practice, where professional and academic staff with diverse expertise collaborate to drive innovation and transformation. This emerging initiative outlines a collaborative approach to institution-wide curriculum embedding, in which advisers from multiple services work alongside academic colleagues to inform the design of curriculum that actively teaches student success.

06E REFEREED PAPER

SUCCESS

Supporting Part-Time Students in a Full-Time World

A/Prof Kelly Linden, Dr Sarah Teakel
CSU

Globally, widening participation agendas outline ambitious goals to increase student enrolments, with an associated increase in student diversity. Part-time study intersects with all equity groups. However, students who study part time have lower success and retention than their full-time peers. The aim of this study is to identify challenges contributing to this disparity and to determine enablers of part-time student success. A mixed methods research approach was used, including Australian public university sector data and a national survey completed by 965 part-time students from 35 Australian universities. In 2024, 35% of Australian domestic university students were enrolled to study part time and the average success rate was seven percentage points lower than for full-time students. The most common reason for studying part time was the need to work. Part-time students valued quality learning and teaching to help with success, including engaging and inspiring teaching, an easy to navigate learning management system (LMS), and recorded lectures.

06F EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

Relational and practical approaches to professional and academic staff partnerships for first year student success.

Ms Thi Yen Nhi Dao, Mr Abhineet Nirmal, Ms Olga Kerle, Ms Ellie Keegan
CDU

In 2024, Charles Darwin University (CDU) presented a poster at the STARS Conference on a first year student transition support program piloted in the Faculty of Health in Semester 2, 2023 (Gamage & Chamberlain, 2024). Following positive outcomes across three supported first year units, CDU established the First Year Student Success (FYSS) team in mid-2024 and expanded support to all faculties. The team has a strong focus on building partnerships with academic staff at the unit (subject) level to embed initiatives that improve unit success rates and reduce failures due to non-submission. This emerging initiative shares key learnings and practical approaches from our collaboration with academic staff, which have led to both meaningful partnerships and positive outcomes in student success data.

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11:50AM - 12:20PM
PARALLEL SESSION

07

07A EMERGING INITIATIVE
TRANSITIONS

When the Draft Writes Itself: Shifting Pathway Learning from Production to Judgement

Mr Danny Green, Mr Pierce Larkin
RMIT Vietnam

Generative AI tools have reduced the time and effort required to move from thought to readable prose, challenging the long-held position of writing as the mainstay in assessing student thinking and learning, and therefore changing which skills are most crucial to teach in a pathway course to best prepare students for university success. This emerging initiative reframes Gen AI not as a threat demanding strict policing or prohibition, but rather as an opportunity to redirect curriculum time toward more transferable higher-order cognitive capabilities like critical evaluation and analysis. Through embracing AI as a thinking and production partner, albeit one that must be managed, evaluated and guided critically, written production is now “subbed out” to AI, creating significant time to focus on the first principles of academic composition and critical evaluation. It is believed that this will lead to better higher education outcomes for pathway students across disciplines.

07B EMERGING INITIATIVE
STUDENTS

How Peer Classroom Cultures Shape Indigenous Students’ Quality of Life in Higher Education

Professor Maria Raciti
UniSC

This paper reframes Indigenous student success beyond sector metrics to focus on quality of life while enrolled, which is operationalised as students’ capacity to be, become, and belong. Drawing on mixed-methods data from two universities, the research reveals that peer classroom cultures function as pedagogical infrastructure, significantly impacting Indigenous students’ wellbeing independent of lecturer intent. Culturally ignorant peers substantially harm quality of life, while knowledgeable peers support it. Where cultural safety is compromised, Indigenous-Indigenous connection becomes essential for sustaining wellbeing. This work challenges staff-centric approaches and positions peer cultural competence as foundational to equitable learning environments. The presentation will solicit feedback on cultivating non-Indigenous peer capability without instrumentalising Indigenous students.

07C EMERGING INITIATIVE
RETENTION

Investigating the use of advanced statistical analysis to understand the impact of uncoordinated and overlapping student equity interventions

Mr Clancy Birrell, Mr Muhammad Zia, Dr Ruth Kamrowski, Dr Roby Jose,
Ms Laura Sturmer, Ms Vivian Wu, Professor Caroline Rueckert
Griffith University

We examined the feasibility of using advanced statistical analyses to advance both institutional practice and the national evidence base on the impact of HEPPP-funded student support. Student success, retention, and completion data were analysed using Survival Analysis, Multilevel Mixed Effects Modelling and Channel Attribution, to investigate the combined effects of overlapping, uncoordinated equity interventions at Griffith University. All three approaches proved feasible and generated meaningful insights into how multiple supports interact. However, while the methods were sufficiently flexible to accommodate longitudinal administrative data, overlapping interventions, and heterogeneous student pathways—key complexities in equity evaluation—causal inference was not achievable with the existing design. However, with strengthened data capture, greater coordination in intervention delivery, and the adoption of balanced standard experimental design (e.g. randomised controlled trial or randomised hold out sample), this integrated approach could generate strong, sector-relevant evidence to inform the evaluation and optimisation of equity student support.

07D EMERGING INITIATIVE
SUCCESS

A 2026 Update: When less groupwork assessment is more: capturing students’ diverse funds of knowledges in an ultimate year law course

Dr Paula Zito
Adelaide University

In 2024, the author presented an ‘Emerging Initiative’ paper at the STARS Conference titled ‘When less groupwork assessment is more: capturing students’ diverse funds of knowledges in an ultimate year law course.’ That paper discussed initial findings from an Action Research project commenced in 2023 at the University of South Australia (UniSA) in the Law discipline. In this paper, the author will share the final findings from the Action Research project conducted at UniSA during both 2023 and 2024 and provide an update on the results and outcomes of the project.

07E EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

Improvements to the Academic Success Program at UTS College

Mr Isaac Howell, Mr Aljonn Santos, Mr Todd Tang, Mr Thomas Mikhail
UTS College

The Academic Success Program (ASP) is an initiative at University of Technology Sydney College (UTS College). It has been used over the last 10 years as a formal early intervention model identify and support students who are classed as "High Risk". Previously this process and method were heavily reliant on manual administration tasks and tracking of students which resulted in data being held in multiple locations, duplication of work and an overall poor student experience. In 2025 a working group was assembled to redesign the ASP process to reduce the number of manual tasks from 10 to 2. The new automated sections provide more accurate output and allow more time for meaningful interactions between staff and students. This paper provides details of the work that was undertaken and the intended impact upon the student experience and student support.

07F EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

What does good look like? Value for Investment in disability services

Dr Nadine Zacharias, Mr Des Minton
The University of Melbourne

Dr Mel Henry
Dr Mel Henry Consulting

Students with disability are the fastest growing of the four priority cohorts identified by the Australian Universities Accord Review. Strong growth and changing funding arrangements are prompting universities to rethink operating models for disability services, often in the context of progressing Universal Design for Learning (UDL) approaches within their institution.

Using a Value for Investment (Vfi) Framework, this paper explores how the needs and expectations of students with disability (as service users), staff (as service providers), and institutional leadership and the Department of Education (as funders) define what “good” service provision looks like. We then share how the University of Melbourne is approaching the development of its Reporting and Performance Framework to assess progress towards desired outcomes.

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1:20PM – 2:20PM
LAUNCHPADS

LPA1 LAUNCHPAD
SUCCESS

Building belonging through advising: a novel micro-interaction framework

Ms Aretha Zygori
UNSW College

Belonging strongly predicts student persistence and academic success, particularly for pathway students facing complexity. (Strayhorn, 2018; Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Kift, Nelson & Clarke, 2010). Although Adlerian principles—encouragement, social interest, and collaborative goal-setting—align with advising practice (Farsi, 2022), these have not been systematically operationalised within pathway contexts.

This study addresses that gap through a practitioner action research trial (Kemmis, McTaggart & Nixon, 2014) at UNSW College (T3 2025): a five-step, five-minute micro-interaction framework with 31 domestic diploma students across over 100 interactions. Each step translates Adlerian constructs into brief, repeatable practices embedded in routine encounters.

Micro-interactions act as behavioural and motivational cues, shaping students' perceptions of capability and belonging in real time. The framework extends advising approaches by foregrounding the impact of small relational signals, drawing on evidence that micro-interactions can enhance belonging and engagement (Powell et al., 2013).

Reflective notes provide exploratory evidence of increased engagement and student-generated strategies. Outcomes (71% pass rate; 90.3% re-enrolment) are descriptive rather than causal, but broadly align with evidence on brief belonging interventions (Walton & Cohen, 2011; Dills & Traywick, 2024). AI is explored as a scalable supplement, with attention to equity, privacy, and relational limits.

LPA2 LAUNCHPAD
STUDENTS

If belonging matters, why don't students show up? Rethinking how we design and deliver support

Elizabeth Naish, Anlon O'Brien
QUT

Research shows students who feel a sense of belonging are more likely to succeed at university (van Kessel et al., 2025; Gilani et al, 2024; Walton et al., 2023). Institutions invest significant time and resources to address the academic, social, and wellbeing challenges students themselves identify. Yet we repeatedly see the students who say they need support not attending the sessions designed for them (Bornschelegl & Caltabiano, 2022).

The presentation explores belonging and how traditional workshop models often rely on students recognising a deficit, opting in, and attending at a specific time and place (Wingate, 2006) - which may unintentionally exclude or disengage learners (Schneider & Hiskey, 2024). It then moves to two examples of collaborations across QUT to meet identified needs and asks whether the issue lies not with student motivation, but with the form and framing of our support interventions.

The session concludes by exploring approaches to fostering belonging such as core units and engagement with Cogniti agents, without relying on attendance-based activities. The sessions aim is to spark discussion about how we can design support that students are more likely to encounter, interact with, and experience as belonging and student success, beyond what we already know.

LPA3 LAUNCHPAD
STUDENTS

Students as staff: Do student employees need different training?

Ms Elizabeth Naish
QUT

Universities increasingly rely on students in paid, on campus roles occupying a dual identity as both learners and employees. While research highlights the importance of structured training and professional development (Pham, 2022; Lin et al., 2025), many institutions position them within professional development systems designed primarily for continuing/sessional staff.

With this as a starting point the presentation explores the value of student employment for confidence, belonging, and employability, contingent on appropriate preparation and support (Millard, 2020; Payne et al., 2023) and considers professional development frameworks in higher education that largely prioritise career employees, with limited attention to students' developmental stage or academic context (Zwolińska Gładys et al., 2024).

Building on current research and institutional practice, we examine how student employees are trained and where inconsistencies and inequities emerge between volunteer and paid student roles. In doing so, we highlight a gap concerning the coordination and coherence of student staff training models.

The session concludes with a focus on centralised training that aligns with students' academic and developmental contexts. The session aims to establish a community of practice and framework for student employees, alongside strategic gains for institutions through better prepared student staff delivering peer support, transition assistance, and other student facing services.

LPA4 LAUNCHPAD
SUCCESS

Building psychological safety through physical learning environment strategies

Dr Eliza Kitchen
Flinders University

Psychological safety refers to creating learning environments in which students feel comfortable to actively engage, ask questions, and take academic risks (Wake et al., 2023). Student feedback on my teaching, describing a “relaxed atmosphere where people can relate their experiences and try new things,” prompted critical reflection on how such environments are intentionally—or unintentionally—created. While psychological safety is widely recognised as essential for student engagement and success, educators often lack practical guidance and resources that translate this concept into everyday teaching practice.

At a similar time, an unanticipated theme emerged from qualitative interviews with eight academics exploring the physical learning environment: psychological safety was repeatedly identified as an outcome of deliberate physical and spatial design choices. The physical learning environment encompasses attributes such as room layout, furniture flexibility, and spatial organisation, all of which can enable or constrain learning activities and student interaction (Hao et al., 2020). Participants described how relatively small, intentional adjustments to physical space contributed to a sense of comfort, inclusion, and safety for students, supporting participation and peer interaction. By exploring the physical learning environment, this work contributes practical insights into how psychological safety can be intentionally designed into higher education classrooms.

LPA5 LAUNCHPAD
STUDENTS

Success through their eyes: Developing support for impact and equity

Mr Martin Luna Juncal, Mr Donald Robert Jeffrey
GU

The Learning and Study Skills Hub (LSSH) at Griffith University was established in 2025 to bring together a wide range of peer-led academic support programs within the Library, creating a single access point for students. Bringing together one of Australia’s largest PASS programs, a Study Support peer program, targeted initiatives such as LANTITE exam preparation, and direct connections to library services, the Hub aims to ensure students feel supported, connected, and empowered throughout their academic journey.

Emerging from a significant organisational shift from faculty-based programs to a library-led model, the LSSH places the student voice at the centre of its approach. Students are not only participants in support services, but active contributors to how success is defined, communicated, and experienced. Through student and staff storytelling, the Hub has developed a success statement that captures the challenges, milestones, and moments that shape the student experience.

This student-centred approach has driven role innovation and embedded co-design across training, service delivery, and development. Hybrid Student Leader positions have created meaningful employment pathways while empowering students to shape the support offered to their peers. This presentation explores how centralised, peer-led support can strengthen belonging, confidence, equity, and student success through collaborative and student-informed practice.

LPB1 LAUNCHPAD
TRANSITIONS

Supporting Diverse HDR Student Transition Through the Intensive Writing Course (IWC): An Academic Literacy Initiative at Monash University

Dr Thu Do, Dr Farzana Khan
Monash

Higher Degree by Research (HDR) students often face significant academic and transitional challenges in early candidature, particularly in developing familiarity with disciplinary writing conventions, academic literacy expectations, and scholarly impact (Liardet, 2024; McDowall & Ramos, 2024). These challenges can be further intensified for international HDR students navigating new academic, linguistic, and cultural contexts (Aspland et al., 2021), potentially impacting their longer-term doctoral progress and success.

This LaunchPad presents the Intensive Writing Course (IWC), an academic literacy initiative delivered by Student Academic Success at Monash University. The IWC provides a structured, research-informed approach to developing writing confidence and capability across diverse HDR cohorts in STEMM and HASS disciplines. It aims to enhance clarity, coherence, and impact in doctoral research writing through ten sessions focusing on modelling, scaffolding, and application.

Positioned within the Australian HDR landscape, the IWC offers a unique model addressing transitional writing needs. Student feedback indicates improved clarity, confidence, and readiness for milestone completions. This presentation invites discussion on embedding academic literacy programs to support inclusive HDR transition and equitable research success.

LPB2 LAUNCHPAD
SUCCESS

Speaking Studio: A New Model for Academic Oral Literacy

Dr Farzana Khan, Dr Ha Nguyen, Dr Sam Haugh
Monash

Despite the heavy focus on written literacy in higher education, a critical gap remains in developing students’ oral communication skills for academic and professional success. This presentation introduces the Student Academic Success (SAS) Speaking Studio at Monash University, an innovative program designed to bridge this gap. Aligned with the Monash Student Experience Plan 2025–2028, the Studio shifts away from traditional, isolated services toward an integrated, collaborative model.

Grounded in Etienne Wenger’s Community of Practice (CoP) framework, the initiative brings together SAS learning advisers as facilitators, domestic and international students as learners, and Master of TESOL students as observers. The interactive, face-to-face workshops target three core CoP elements: Domain (academic fluency), Community (peer interaction), and Practice (rehearsing real-world scenarios).

By utilising Task-Based Language Teaching (TBLT) approaches, the Speaking Studio provides students with essential language repertoires, practical strategies, and real-time expert feedback in a low-stakes environment. Ultimately, this program offers a transferable institutional model for fostering spoken English confidence, transforming the student experience, and enhancing future career readiness.

LPB3 LAUNCHPAD
TRANSITIONS

From Undergraduate to Graduate Year: Reimagining Graduate Transitions Through Career-Readiness Partnerships

Ms Lisa Speedie, Ms Michelle Lane
CSU

For undergraduate nursing students in regional and rural Australia, the transition to professional practice is complicated by workforce shortages, competitive graduate recruitment, and limited access to industry knowledge. Despite growing recognition of this challenge, preparation for graduate applications and career readiness remains an add-on rather than a curriculum priority.

In 2024, Charles Sturt University piloted a partnership-driven model for a final-year nursing subject in collaboration with CSU Careers. Unlike extracurricular offerings, the initiative embedded graduate application preparation and career readiness directly into the curriculum, aligning it with real-time recruitment processes, including NSW Health GradStart, through workshops, industry engagement, and one-on-one coaching.

The impact was immediate. Career appointments rose by 150% in 2024 (up 125% on 2023), and LHD interview panels reported improved candidate performance, greater confidence, stronger clinical reasoning, and clearer articulation of relevant examples.

This 7-minute presentation covers the model's design, evidence of impact, and the conditions that enabled collaboration, offering practical takeaways for institutions seeking to adapt this approach. The key argument: graduate application support and career readiness cannot be a single intervention; they require sustained, partnership-dependent commitment embedded throughout the degree.

LPB4 LAUNCHPAD
SUCCESS

Targeted digital outreach to potentially at-risk first-year students

Ms Chi Luong
RMIT Vietnam

This LaunchPad showcases how RMIT Vietnam uses integrated digital communication workflows to proactively connect potentially at-risk first-year students with Embedded Learning Advisors (ELAs) at the moments support is most needed. Rather than relying on passive "opt-in" services, the initiative combines Canvas engagement data, personalised HTML emails, Microsoft Power Automate, Teams adaptive cards and targeted Canvas announcements to embed support directly into students' digital learning environments.

The session will demonstrate how these systems work together to create timely, scalable and low-friction outreach journeys that normalise help-seeking and reduce barriers to accessing support. Early results are promising: more than 1,100 students were contacted through targeted outreach, generating 803 support appointments, while approximately 30% of students contacted after failing an assessment later engaged with support services.

This LaunchPad invites participants to explore how existing institutional platforms can be repurposed to create more proactive, connected and human-centred support journeys while maintaining the personal touch of student support at scale.

LPC1 LAUNCHPAD
STUDENTS

Equipped to Succeed: The Be Ready Equity Initiative

Dr Trixie James, Kristin Freeman
CQU

CQUniversity Australia is recognised for its strong commitment to widening participation and supporting students from diverse and underrepresented backgrounds. Many students entering higher education through Enabling programs such as Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) come from regional, low socioeconomic, First Nations, or non-traditional educational pathways and often begin university without access to essential learning resources (James, 2024). The Be Ready Equity Initiative was developed by the School of Access Education's Social Innovation Working Party to address this often-overlooked barrier to participation. The initiative provides targeted equity packs to students experiencing significant financial hardship, equipping them with practical resources such as laptops, headphones, calculators, stationery, and personal care items tailored to their study needs. Students are identified through staff referrals and interviews to ensure support reaches those most disadvantaged. By reducing these barriers early, the program aims to strengthen student confidence, belonging, engagement, and persistence. Embedded research is evaluating the initiative's impact on student readiness, engagement, retention, and progression, highlighting the transformative potential of practical equity-focused interventions in Enabling education.

LPC2 LAUNCHPAD
TRANSITIONS

Building the Bridge: A Pre-Transition Academic Readiness Framework for Diploma Students Entering Second-Year Bachelor Programs

Ms Leonie Webster
CQU

Diploma-to-Bachelor pathways extend access to higher education; however, students who articulate directly into second-year programs often bypass first-year transition curricula, contributing to uncertainty about academic expectations. This Launch Pad presents a pre-transition framework for academic readiness embedded within the Diploma phase, prior to progression to AQF Level 7 study. The framework supports student confidence, preparedness, and continuity across the VET-HE boundary by repositioning transition as proactive preparation rather than reactive, post-entry remediation. It adopts a scalable and flexible approach that enables early engagement with academic support services, normalising help-seeking behaviours before entry into higher education. By strengthening readiness in advance, the framework aims to enhance student engagement, retention, and success in pathway programs.

LPC3 LAUNCHPAD
STUDENTS

A co-designed evaluation framework for equity initiatives that target students from refugee backgrounds

Mr Timothy McLennan, A/Prof Rose Amazan
UNSW

A/Prof Sally Baker
Refugee Education Australia

Increasing numbers of students from refugee backgrounds (SfRB) are attending higher education (HE) institutions in Australia (Molla & Baker, 2024). Although SfRB are heterogenous, the literature highlights that many SfRB encounter similar barriers in HE including experiences of trauma, disrupted education, and institutional monolingualism (Stevenson & Baker, 2024). While many universities offer targeted equity initiatives for SfRB, there is a paucity of literature on how these initiatives have been evaluated. Similar observations across the Australian HE sector have led to the development of the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF) (Robinson et al., 2025). The SEHEEF is a flexible tool that can be strengthened through the inclusion of outcomes of success co-designed with students, and through the addition of guidelines for evaluation with specific student cohorts including SfRB. My PhD focuses on how SfRB student co-researchers and other stakeholders in refugee education define success and how it can be evaluated. In this LaunchPad presentation, I will introduce a co-designed evaluation framework, which identifies targeted equity initiatives for SfRB, co-designed outcomes of success, and tailored guidelines for evaluation practice. This presentation will focus on considerations for evaluation with SfRB in HE, including relational safety, trust, power sharing and collaboration.

LPC4 LAUNCHPAD
SUCCESS

Recipe Cards, Not Reports: A Practical Workshop Method for Making Student Engagement Impact Visible

Dr David Fulcher, Ms Caitlin Pyle
UOW

Student engagement teams often “know what works” but struggle to capture that knowledge in a clear, reusable form. This LaunchPad presents a practical facilitation method that uses simple “recipe cards” to translate practice into outcome-focused statements.

In a 60-90 minute workshop, teams move from real examples of student impact to structured recipe cards that capture Ingredients, Method, Serves, Results, and Secret Sauce. Using plain-English causal logic, the approach helps teams articulate how their work contributes to student success.

The presentation demonstrates how this method produces a reusable artefact that supports alignment, communication, and outcome-focused thinking and can be applied immediately in other institutional contexts.

LPC5 LAUNCHPAD
STUDENTS

Empowering Indigenous voices in higher education: AI-assisted integration of Indigenous perspectives

Dr Vanessa Sewell, Ms Katherine Carter
UNE

The Indigenous Voice Assistant (IVA) represents an innovative approach to addressing systemic barriers that impact Indigenous student access, participation, and success in higher education. Grounded in the principle that culturally responsive pedagogy is a fundamental right for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples – consistent with Australia’s commitments under the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples – this AI-powered educational assistant guides educators through the sensitive incorporation of Indigenous perspectives, voices, and resources into their curricula. IVA follows a scaffolded, question-by-question approach grounded in culturally responsive pedagogical principles. It assists educators in moving beyond tokenistic acknowledgement towards genuine integration of Indigenous voices into course design and delivery – a whole-of-course approach that ensures Indigenous content becomes a well-defined layer within the learning continuum (Boer & Fry, 2025). This innovation addresses a critical gap in professional development capacity that directly affects Indigenous student outcomes. When educators lack confidence to embed Indigenous perspectives effectively through the Cultural Interface (Nakata, 2007), Indigenous students experience curricula that marginalise their worldviews, undermining belonging and engagement.

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08A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Co-designing Student-Centred Strategies to Strengthen the First-Year Experience at a Regional University

Dr May El Haddad, Ms Tara Gamble, Dr Ben Turner, Dr Loretta Anderson, Dr Rob Buhmann, Ms Kerri-Anne Von Deest, Ms Belinda Christensen, Ms Ciara Habaldo
UniSC

The first year of university is a critical period for student engagement, wellbeing, and retention. This emerging initiative reports on a research-informed project at the University of the Sunshine Coast (UniSC) to strengthen the first-year experience of students in the School of Health (SoH), including diverse and equity cohorts, through co-design with students, academics, and professional staff. Using a sequential mixed-methods design, the project combines a large-scale survey with qualitative interviews and focus groups to examine students' transition experiences. Student partners will help co-design data-informed strategies to enhance belonging, engagement, and academic success. The presentation will outline the project and invite discussion on embedding student partnership in first-year transition initiatives.

08B GOOD PRACTICE REPORT STUDENTS

Indigenising the university curriculum: An interdisciplinary collaborative approach between Indigenous and non-Indigenous educators

Katelyn Barney, Tracey Bunda
UQ

There is a national imperative to Indigenise the university curriculum, with Universities Australia (2023) recognising the inherent value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledge systems. Indigenising the curriculum supports Indigenous students to see themselves reflected in their studies and enables non-Indigenous students to engage with Indigenous histories, cultures and societies. While many non-Indigenous academics are keen to embed Indigenous perspectives, this work is often perceived as challenging in disciplines where such perspectives may not appear an obvious fit. Building on our leadership in this area, this practice report examines a University of Queensland Teaching Innovation funded project that developed and piloted Indigenised teaching and learning activities across six courses in biomedical science, musicology, geography, veterinary science, general science and engineering. Undertaken in collaboration with an Indigenous reference group, the project highlights the processes, challenges and benefits of an interdisciplinary, collaborative approach. We present outcomes, including transferable case studies, and key lessons to inform Indigenising curriculum practices across universities nationally.

08C EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Serial enrollers or strategic planners? A learning analytics whodunit

Natalie Oostergo, Aleesha Love
UniSQ

Student retention is a key priority in the Australian tertiary sector. At the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ), 63 students were identified who enrolled in and withdrew from ten or more courses before census. This study examines whether this behaviour indicated genuine student risk or a strategic form of self-regulated learning (SRL). A mixed methods approach combined post census interviews with analysis of academic outcomes. Most respondents reported enrolling in multiple courses to compare scheduling options and manage study alongside external commitments. These students achieved higher success rates (82% vs 80%) and GPA (4.9 vs 4.5) than the broader cohort (n12,040), suggesting the behaviour reflected strategic planning rather than risk. Interrogating this behaviour ensured resources were allocated where needed and illustrates the value of grounding learning-analytics interpretation in learning-science theory.

08D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Atrium: An Emerging Initiative for Academic Outreach and Student Success

Harrison Munday, Sarita Guy, Robert Whannell, Martin Schmude, Johan Boshoff, Ben Davies
UNE

This Emerging Initiative paper outlines the development of a novel student support platform for academics called Atrium. Built on the principle that meaningful student-teacher relationships reduce transactional distance and increase relationship of care, Atrium affords academics the tools to form these relations and connect with students before they are at risk of dropping out. This paper outlines the innovative functions within Atrium that give academics at The University of New England (UNE) the tools to assist with identifying, engaging, supporting, and retaining at-risk students, while building stronger student-teacher relationships of care.

08E EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

Name it to Tame it: Sector Wide Unit Failure Typologies to Improve Student Success

Mr Neil van der Ploeg, A/Prof Kelly Linden, Dr Sarah Teakel
CSU

In 2025, we presented a paper at the STARS conference titled 'Developing a Typology of Unit Failure to Improve Student Support'. This presentation showed a high-level university summary of how assessment submission patterns and assessment performance by students who failed a unit varied. We proposed a detailed typology of unit failure to be considered as a standardised way to classify unit failure. In 2026, we have built upon this work and used the typology of unit failure to investigate how unit failure type varied for undergraduate students from 2020 to 2023 across the university by: faculty, course, number of unit assessments, mode of unit delivery and equity group membership. The results show that the number of unit assessments had the strongest association with students' unit failure type. Structural factors (assessment design, course, faculty and delivery mode) generally outweighed equity group differences. The sector should focus on understanding the drivers of unit failure type to inform how we can tailor our support for these students.

08F EMERGING INITIATIVE

RETENTION

Where there is a WIL there is a Way: A collaborative approach

Mrs Karen Latten, Ms Nichole Orwin
RMIT

First-year Bachelor of Nursing (BN) students at RMIT University in Melbourne, are required to complete complex pre-clinical documentation to be eligible to attend clinical placement at the end of the year. Historically, students have found these requirements confusing and difficult to navigate, resulting in clinical placement delay and disruption to program progression. In response, nursing academics and Work Integrated Learning (WIL) professional staff implemented a suite of changes that focused on communication, curriculum integration and collaborative support to demystify and contextualise the pre-clinical placement documentation requirements. This paper aims to describe the process and progress nursing academics and WIL professional staff have made in supporting students and reducing the number of students delaying their program due to non-compliance.

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09A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Embedding Academic Skills in a Large First-Year Programme

Dr Lisa Russell, Dr Rebecca J Bird
University of Otago

This initiative describes the design and implementation of an embedded academic skills programme within a large first-year Health Sciences cohort (>2000) at the University of Otago. Recognising that many students enter university without strategies required for success, key academic skills were integrated into the programme. Sessions were timetabled, aligned with the student lifecycle, and delivered "just in time" to support immediate application. Observations over three years suggest increased awareness of effective strategies, improved help-seeking, and greater clarity around academic expectations. This initiative demonstrates the value of embedded, scalable approaches to supporting transition in diverse student cohorts.

09B REFEREED PAPER STUDENTS

The Students We Don't See: Characterising Student Experience in Australian Higher Education

Dr Novia Minaee, Dr Paul Koshy, A/Prof Gemma Cadby, Professor Ian Li
Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success

Australian higher education equity policy has traditionally relied on demographic indicators to identify students at risk. While these classifications remain essential for addressing structural disadvantage, they may obscure variation in how students experience university. Using a person-centred Latent Class Analysis (LCA), this study examined multidimensional patterns of underlying student experience and their associations with intention to leave and academic performance. Drawing on nationally representative data from the Quality Indicators for Learning and Teaching (QILT) Student Experience Survey (SES) from 2019 to 2022 (approximately 230,000 domestic undergraduate students), five latent classes were identified, characterised by distinct configurations of belonging, engagement, institutional support, satisfaction, and external pressures. These classes were stable across survey years and formed a clear hierarchy of risk. Students in the "Disengaged" and "Engaged but under-supported" classes consistently showed the highest likelihood of considering leaving university or reporting a fail grade, whereas those in the "Happy overall" class demonstrated the lowest risk. Each equity group contained a heterogeneous mix of experience classes. Findings suggest that experience-based approaches can complement existing equity frameworks by enabling more nuanced identification of student vulnerability.

09C REFEREED PAPER ACHIEVEMENT

Gen AI-first Maths Support at a Regional Australian University

Dr. Luis Camacho, Dr. Christopher Bridge, Professor Birgit Loch
Federation University Australia

Maths support has long been present in Australian tertiary education, primarily as a physical space staffed by tutors and complemented by asynchronous resources and accessible via integration into course curricula. This format has proved effective in improving student retention and transition (Horrocks et al., 2026) and will only increase in salience as student cohorts diversify. Artificial Intelligence (AI) has shown potential for providing low-stakes mathematics and numeracy support that gives immediate, personalised feedback and clarification to students. A trial of generative AI (GenAI) agents as a first point of contact for mathematics support for nursing and education students at Federation University Australia found that students accessed support outside of office hours and during semester periods of highest need, indicating the potential of AI as a just-in-time learning tool. Furthermore, the qualitative data from the agent conversations showed that the agents were being utilised overwhelmingly for learning rather than cognitive offloading.

09D EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

Cultivating Resonance in Indigenous Students' Experiences of University

Professor Maria Raciti
UniSC

This paper reframes Indigenous students' university experience through the concept of resonance, examining how students navigate institutional alignment through strategic identity positioning and how Indigenous Centres support this navigation in ways that exceed service utilisation metrics. Resonance refers to Indigenous students' experience of institutional attunement, recognition, and responsiveness. Resonance is Indigenous students' capacity to find themselves reflected and affirmed within university structures and relations. Drawing on mixed-methods data from two universities, the study first reveals that many Indigenous students strategically foreground professional identity over cultural identity in everyday university contexts. This pattern reflects adaptive navigation seeking resonance with dominant institutional norms. The second key finding challenges conventional assumptions: Indigenous Centres are highly valued by low-use Indigenous students. Thus, Indigenous Centres provide ambient institutional resonance, signalling recognition and responsiveness even without active service engagement by some Indigenous students. These findings reframe understandings of the Indigenous student experience in Australian universities.

09E EMERGING INITIATIVE

RETENTION

Neuroaffirming Practices in QUT Student Success Coaching: Enhancing Student Engagement and Retention

Chloe Davies
OUT

Student Success Coaching at Queensland University of Technology introduced neuroaffirming initiatives to enhance accessibility, engagement and retention for students with ADHD. Initiatives included optional on-campus coaching, revised email communications, multimodal web resources and an opt-in reminder system to support goal follow-through. Evaluation demonstrated strong impact, with attendance increasing from 62% to 72%, growth in student-initiated bookings, and recommendation scores rising from 8.9/10 to 9.82/10, illustrating the value of neuroaffirming, universally designed approaches in tertiary settings.

09F EMERGING INITIATIVE

Building professional capabilities through research-based, work-integrated learning: The JCU Undergraduate Research Internship

Dr Amanda Krause
James Cook University

The James Cook University Undergraduate Research Internship (URI) is a research-based Work-Integrated Learning program designed to equip regional university students with the capabilities required of healthcare professionals. This presentation will discuss the purpose of the program as well as its parameters and impacts, focusing on how such programs can be implemented more widely to support developing undergraduates' graduate competencies and professional identities.

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10A REFEREED PAPER TRANSITIONS

What sort of engineer am I? Understanding identity and belonging in engineering major selection

Dr Amy Young, Dr Sam Cunningham, Ms Renee Nightingale
QUT

Ms Aurora Greene
UoM

This study investigates how first-year engineering students navigate the process of selecting an engineering major, framing the decision as an emergent and identity-informed process. Drawing on social cognitive career theory, journey mapping was embedded within a large first-year engineering subject to capture students' reflections on influences shaping their disciplinary preferences. Analysis of 210 journey maps revealed that students most frequently articulated interests, goals and enacted experiences, while explicit self-efficacy statements were rare. Comparative analysis across civil, mechanical and electrical majors identified distinct patterns of alignment linked to practical exposure, aspirational goal setting and mathematics preparation. Findings suggest that major selection is influenced not only by competence beliefs but by perceptions of belonging and disciplinary culture.

10B EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

"Change the future": Educating healthcare students for LGBTQIA+ inclusive practice

Dr Gemma Mann, Dr Corey Bloomfield, Dr Tina McAdie, Dr Madeline Sprajcer, Natalie Browning,
Jenn Stanley, Lisa Hurring
CQU

Research shows that people who identify as LGBTQIA+ are less likely to access health services due to fear of discrimination and inequitable treatment from practitioners based around their sexual orientation, gender identity or bodily characteristics. This study investigated the reasons behind this fear, potential training gaps for health practitioners, and the role institutions can play in equipping future graduates for inclusive practice. Drawing on interviews with ten members of the community who identified or had close relatives who identified as LGBTQIA+, thematic analysis revealed five key themes relating to practitioner education. Findings highlight specific, actionable gaps in the curricula and demonstrate practical strategies to address these gaps while aligning with professional accreditation standards across health disciplines. The results and recommendations are relevant to universities, vocational training organisations, and other providers of diversity training, and offer transferable strategies to embed inclusive practice and strengthen student success across academic and professional settings.

10C EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

AI-supported problem-solving and reflexivity in legal education

Natalie Oostergo, Professor Lynda Crowley-Cyr (Honorary), Dr Julie Copley (Honorary)
UniSQ

This paper is directed to the challenges and opportunities presented by integrating artificial intelligence into introductory problem-solving assessment in legal education. The initiative examines whether early exposure to AI-supported reasoning can strengthen students' analytical confidence and reveal gaps in their understanding of legal method. Mixed methods analysis of the initiative highlights tension between technological assistance and development of independent professional judgement, emphasising the need for structured scaffolding promoting reflexivity rather than reliance. The framework trialled, drawn from contemporary pedagogical research, positioned AI as a catalyst for deeper engagement with legal principles, enabling students to interrogate assumptions, evaluate alternative interpretations, and articulate clearer reasoning pathways. Ultimately, the paper reports that thoughtful design of AI-enabled assessment can enhance learning outcomes if accompanied by explicit guidance, transparent expectations, and a commitment to cultivating critical, adaptable legal thinkers.

10D EMERGING INITIATIVE
TRANSITIONS

Indigenising the curriculum in pathway programs: Centring staff and student perspectives of teaching and learning

Bronwyn Fredericks, Katelyn Barney, Tracey Bunda, Nisa Richy, Daniel Taylor-Griffiths
The University of Queensland

Ash Moor
UQ College

Scott Parlett
University of New South Wales

Kirsten Hausia
The University of Melbourne

The importance of incorporating Indigenous perspectives into curricula has been repeatedly emphasised in higher education reports and policy documents. For example, the Universities Australia Indigenous Strategy 2017-2020 (UA, 2017) acknowledged the inherent value of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples' unique knowledge systems. Elsewhere, Fredericks et al. (2017) call for the development of best-practice guidelines for teaching staff to improve Indigenous course content in pathway programs. Certainly, there is a need for further best-practice frameworks and/or exemplars in relation to Indigenising the curriculum of pathway programs. In this presentation, we will discuss findings from an ACSES funded research project which focused on exploring Indigenous students' experiences in pathway/enabling programs. Drawing on findings from interviews with Indigenous students, graduates and staff who work in pathway programs, we will discuss the benefits of Indigenising the curriculum of pathway programs to ensure Indigenous students have an optimal learning experience by creating a sense of connection with the curriculum and with their own identities. We also discuss examples of the ways Indigenous perspectives and knowledges have been embedded in the curriculum at three universities and reflect on the need to ensure professional development opportunities for staff to assist them in appropriately embedding Indigenous perspectives in the curriculum of pathway programs.

10E EMERGING INITIATIVE
SUCCESS

Designing GenAI mentoring for women cybersecurity students: Supporting confidence, engagement and workforce transition

Dr Leanne Ngo, Dr Javed Chowdhury, Mary George
La Trobe University

Women remain underrepresented in cybersecurity education and the workforce, with ongoing challenges in confidence, participation, and transition into industry roles. While Generative Artificial Intelligence (GenAI) is increasingly used to support technical learning, its potential as a tool for mentoring, identity development, and career readiness remains underexplored. This emerging initiative presents the design and pilot of a GenAI-based mentoring agent to support female cybersecurity students across their learning and transition journey. The model focuses on three domains: self-efficacy, participation and belonging, and career identity and transition. Positioned as a human-centred mentoring layer, the agent extends existing peer and cyber mentoring initiatives through scalable, personalised support. Ethics-approved surveys and interviews will evaluate the initiative's impact on student experience, engagement, and transition confidence. Findings will inform future refinement.

10F EMERGING INITIATIVE
SUCCESS

CUC-OUA collaboration pilot: strengthening regional online student success through integrated and place-based support

Ms Ange Rice
OUA

This Emerging Initiative presents a collaboration model between Country Universities Centre (CUC) and Open Universities Australia (OUA) designed to improve academic success and equity outcomes for regional online learners. The presentation offers a practical partnership framework adaptable to diverse institutional and community contexts.

While online higher education has expanded access, regional students continue to experience lower attainment rates (Stone, 2019). Keenan's (2025) research identifies Regional University Study Hubs as critical equity infrastructure strengthening academic identity, belonging, and community connection.

OUA, a not-for-profit organisation established by Australian universities to broaden participation in higher education, piloted an integrated support model aligning student lifecycle support with place-based study hub services. Within participating CUC catchment areas, 12% of enrolled students registered with their local study hub. Registered students achieved a 75% pass rate, compared with 62% for non-registered peers, suggesting integrated community-based support may improve outcomes for regional online learners.

WEDNESDAY

CONFERENCE INFO P. 06-11	PROGRAM P. 13-35	PARALLEL SESSIONS 1-4 P. 39-61	POSTER SESSIONS P. 65-108	PARALLEL SESSIONS 5-7 P. 109-126	LAUNCHPADS P. 127-136	PARALLEL SESSIONS 8-17 P. 137-199
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9:00AM - 9:30AM
PARALLEL SESSION

11

CONFERENCE INFO P. 06-11	PROGRAM P. 13-35	PARALLEL SESSIONS 1-4 P. 39-61	POSTER SESSIONS P. 65-108	PARALLEL SESSIONS 5-7 P. 109-126	LAUNCHPADS P. 127-136	PARALLEL SESSIONS 8-17 P. 137-199
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11A EMERGING INITIATIVE
STUDENTS

Developing Evaluation Practice: First Year Experience Program Influence on Student Equity Outcomes

Ms Elisa McGowan, Ms Clara Yuan, Ms Katie Douglas
UWA

Dr Nadine Zacharias
SUT

Professor Ian Li, Mr Oliver Constantine
ACSES

Dr Luke Webster
Curtin

Commencing students often struggle with the transition into tertiary study and forming an identity as a university student (Kift, 2015). This paper reports on a collaborative first-year experience (FYE) program evaluation initiative at a selective research-intensive university. In 2025, we shared design principles for building a cross-functional student equity evaluation team to implement quality evaluation guided by the Student Equity in Higher Education Evaluation Framework (SEHEEF) (Robinson et al., 2025; Zacharias et al., 2025). This paper focuses on the findings including the influence of the FYE program on student outcomes, and updates of what has happened since.

11B EMERGING INITIATIVE
STUDENTS

Strategies for Enhancing Belonging and Connectedness for Under-represented Students Learning Online

Professor Jill Lawrence, A/Prof Alice Brown
UniSQ

Dr Megan Kimber
UQ

Professor Nayana Parange
AU

Professor Puspha Sinnayah, A/Prof Jay Cohen, A/Prof Christopher Fisher
VU

Belonging and connectedness are rapidly gaining prominence in the higher education (HE) research literature. This research has not, however, focused on students from under-represented groups who are learning online. Under-represented students refer to students from First Nations backgrounds; those with a disability; students from regional, rural and remote contexts (Crawford et al., 2023); mature-age students; first in family; parents and carers, refugees; LGBTQI+; and veterans. Also limited in the research are the practical strategies HE teachers use and what they might look like for an online student from these groups. In research data emerging from three online Think Tanks, the views of experts in online engagement and equity in relation to belonging are investigated. The findings show that facilitating students' networking/connections with their peers; developing connections with their students; putting effort into building students' feelings of belonging, and valuing students' engagement are critical in enhancing underrepresented online students' success.

11D EMERGING INITIATIVE
RETENTION

From Reactive to Proactive: Redesigning Academic Advising in an Era of Curriculum Transformation

Dr Kylie Austin, Ms. Kylie Corbett, Ms. Jessica Dahl, Ms. Erin Bishop
ECU

Ongoing curriculum transformation in response to generative artificial intelligence has increased the complexity of students' academic pathways, heightening the need for intentional support during transition and decision making. This paper examines Edith Cowan University's (ECU) shift from reactive, student initiated advising to a proactive, data informed model developed alongside large scale curriculum transformation. It outlines the implementation of Student Maps, an advising dashboard, and a senior concierge model to enable early identification of enrolment misalignment and targeted intervention at scale. Drawing on one teaching period of implementation, the paper identifies opportunities and challenges in embedding proactive advising as an institutional capability that supports student agency, belonging, and progression.

THE EMERGING INITIATIVE

RETENTION

Nudging Beyond Student Engagement and Retention: Do Nudges Improve Students' Sense of Belonging?

Ali Enright, Matt Christian, Georgina Maddox, Yvette Davey, Nicolas Perrota
Flinders University

Nudge analytics is an effective strategy to engage nonengaged students, especially when nudges are sent by students' teachers, versus a centralised professional team. What is less clear, however, is whether teacher-executed nudges carry additional benefits beyond student engagement. Extending the work on our university-wide nudge protocol, in which students' teachers nudged nonengaged students in teaching weeks one and three (of a 12-week semester), we investigated two key research questions: 1) Do nudges impact students' sense of belonging; and 2) Does the nudge message affect nudge impact on student engagement and/or students' sense of belonging? We tested our research questions across two studies: one a simulated learning context and the other a real-world application of the simulated learning study in a first-year psychology unit. In this session, we present the two studies, how they replicated and extended the work from our university-wide nudges protocol and the findings for our research questions.

TIIF EMERGING INITIATIVE

TRANSITIONS

An Interdisciplinary Employability Curriculum Intervention for Occupational Therapy Students

Dr Jacqueline Burgess
UniSC

This emerging initiative paper reports on an interdisciplinary curriculum intervention designed to enhance the employability of occupational therapy (OT) graduates. Two guest lecturer marketing workshops were introduced to a final-year OT course to address the need for OT graduates to have business and marketing knowledge. Occupational therapists are increasingly working in private practices and need to be able to successfully run their own practices. However, student responses to the intervention were mixed, mainly about the need for business and marketing knowledge being taught in their degrees.

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12A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Encouraging students' participation in university: What motivates first-year students to participate on campus?

Dr Claudia Rivera Munoz, Dr Samantha Marangell
University of Melbourne

Understanding how first year students engage with university life is increasingly important given recent declines in class attendance and peer interaction. This semi longitudinal qualitative study investigated the factors motivating fourteen students' participation on campus across their first two years of study at a campus based Australian university. Findings show that institutional incentives, particularly attendance policies, and peer relationships influenced students' decisions to attend classes and campus activities while they navigated competing demands and responsibilities. In this presentation, we aim to foster discussion about the implications of these findings and share practices related to first year students' experiences across different institutions to inform recommendations for educators, practitioners, and institutions.

12B EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

Myths and Misconception: Realities of Incarcerated Students Success in Higher Education

Mx Tahnya L Bella, Dr Cristy Bartlett
UniSQ.

Delivering higher education pathways and undergraduate programs within incarcerated environments presents a range of complex challenges. These challenges extend beyond logistical constraints such as the lack of internet accessibility, and include navigating common myths and misconceptions held by the wider community, as well as by students themselves. This presentation examines the assumptions and expectations commonly encountered by those delivering education into custodial settings. By focusing on the student experience alongside the curriculum design and operational challenges, this presentation will explore current practices and future aspirations within the University of Southern Queensland's established incarcerated higher education programs, building on more than three decades of experience.

12C EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

A New Approach to Sessional Staff Training at Flinders University

Dr Grace Chipperfield, Dr Georgina Maddox
Flinders University

Sessional staff form most of the teaching staff in Australian universities yet experience limited training, insecure employment, and reduced wellbeing. Inadequate sessional teacher training negatively impacts student success outcomes. Evidence shows that structured induction training and professional development improve teaching quality and student success. Flinders University has developed an asynchronous online training program for sessional staff, with role-specific, lifecycle-based modules that give practical, timely guidance tailored to teaching roles. Our approach should improve student transition, retention, and success outcomes by fostering consistent, responsive, and high-quality teaching.

12D EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Future Ready Integrity: Whole of College Assessment Reform

Dr Mark Hinchey, Maria Charalambous
UNSW College

In 2025-2026, UNSW College implemented a College wide approach to artificial intelligence (AI) and assessment in line with TEQSA's guidance to assure learning at a course and program level. The College standardised when and how AI could be used in assessment through a 3C AI Model and established a 60/40 Assessment Design Principle. This combination made expectations transparent, strengthened assessment validity, reformed academic integrity processes while enabling authentic AI-supported tasks. This work is reinforced by the College Communicative Approach, which embeds communication as a means and goal of learning. Early feedback from staff and students shows a reduction in academic integrity cases, fewer grey areas for students, improved workload patterns and greater visibility of assessment controls across programs.

12E REFEREED PAPER

STUDENTS

The Osmosis Plateau: The Limits of Incidental Vocabulary Acquisition in South African Education Students

Ilse Fouche, Maria Prozesky
University of the Witwatersrand

This study investigates the vocabulary proficiency of undergraduate Bachelor of Education (BEd) students at a South African university. Using a quantitative longitudinal design, students (n = 643) were assessed on high-frequency, mid-frequency and low-frequency vocabulary levels. Results reveal students perform well below the thresholds required for accessing unsimplified texts. A sharp proficiency decline was observed first at the 3000-word level, and then again at the 5000-word level, with mastery at these levels remaining relatively stagnant across two years of university study. The findings suggest that incidental learning is insufficient for this demographic. Without explicit intervention aimed at building students' vocabulary knowledge, future teachers risk graduating without the vocabulary knowledge required to mediate the curriculum effectively, perpetuating the country's literacy crisis.

12F EMERGING INITIATIVE

Building employability through reflexive practice, co-design and harnessing an untapped opportunity for career learning in undergraduate science degrees

A/Prof Sharon La Fontaine, Mrs Sharon Berman, Ms Cathy Caballero, A/Prof Karen Young, Dr Anthony R. Rendall, Dr Lynda O'Sullivan, Dr Jen Chung, Mr Julius Daguman Jr, Mrs Amanda McPherson
Deakin University

Graduate employability remains a persistent challenge in higher education, particularly for science graduates with low employment rates since 2012. With an increasing diversity of students, their circumstances and career pathways, supporting successful transition to work requires personalised, equitable and adaptable career development alongside a shift from opt-in to embedded, programmatic approaches. In response, aligned with national priorities and grounded in career development theory and practice wisdom, our approach harnesses paid work as a vehicle for career development learning (CDL). This presentation will outline the design, implementation and early impacts of a curriculum-integrated CDL program, that supports science students to secure paid work early, transitioning into industry-relevant or Stepping Stone roles by graduation, alongside work-integrated learning (WIL), to improve employability outcomes. Embedded tools and surveys help evaluate impact revealing positive impacts on students' perceived preparedness, confidence and engagement in career-relevant Stepping Stone roles.

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10:40AM - 11:10AM
PARALLEL SESSION

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13A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Beyond expectations: Supporting student confidence through action-based response in the first-year

Courtney Geritz, Professor Maria Raciti, Dr Aaron Tham, Dr Da Eul Jeong
UniSC

Students enter university with expectations shaped by media narratives, social networks and institutional marketing about what university life will be like. These representations often form simplified 'gist-based' understandings that shape expectations of the university experience (Reyna, 2021). During the transition to university, students' lived experiences may diverge from these expectations, creating expectation-experience mismatch. Insights from a national study of 405 first-year, first-time university students indicate mismatches are common and that students often attempt to reconcile these discrepancies through autonomous self-management, either through action or inaction. These coping responses influence students' confidence, perceived control and satisfaction with the university experience. This paper proposes an emerging initiative that highlights the importance of supporting constructive, action-based coping responses when expectation-experience mismatch occurs.

13B EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

myBCom GO! Embedding belonging in the curriculum via a scavenger hunt

Dr Veronica Smith, Ms Carrol Besseling
UNSW

myBCom GO! is a curriculum-integrated scavenger hunt that embeds belonging in assessment and links early transition to professional capability development. Implemented in a compulsory hybrid O UoC first-year business course, the activity engaged approximately 1,500 students through on-campus and hybrid pathways. Students self-selected teams, navigated campus, generated artefacts and completed structured reflection prompts aligned to program learning outcomes. The innovation is not the scavenger hunt itself, but its use as a shared early cohort experience that is later revisited through teaching on teamwork, attribution theory, bias and cultural competence. This design reframes belonging from optional orientation or pastoral support to assessable curriculum practice. Drawing on transition pedagogy, experiential learning and inclusive design, the initiative supports peer connection, confidence and professional identity development at scale. Early evidence indicates broad participation, positive student feedback and observable growth in reflective thinking and teamwork learning.

13C EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Breaking the GenAI efficiency paradigm through critical AI literacy

Dr John Pike
AU

Generative AI is frequently marketed on its perceived efficiency benefits, but this presents a risk of students skipping over challenging learning tasks. This presentation discusses efforts in an information literacy course to push back against the efficiency paradigm by incorporating optional use of genAI as additional work to extend students' knowledge rather than a shortcut to an end goal. The course includes overt learning and teaching about genAI's algorithmic operations, while the scaffolded assessment design guides students in the optional use of genAI tools. The aim of this approach is to help students develop their critical AI literacy, meaning their ability to make wise choices about genAI in their learning. GenAI is critically examined to ask whether it can make students' work better, not simply faster.

13D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Replacing costly textbooks with Open Educational Resources to improve student learning

Dr Sarah Teakel, A/Prof Kelly Linden
CSU

In 2025, two Open Educational Resources replaced traditional textbooks in first-year veterinary and animal science units. Developed using Universal Design for Learning principles and transition pedagogy, these resources aim to enhance accessibility and student engagement. This project evaluates students' experiences with the contextualised resources and employs a students-as-partners in a codesign approach to refinement through constructive feedback. Initial findings indicate strong student approval and a desire for additional resources of this type. Benefits include elimination of textbook costs, enhanced consistency in teaching, and highly relevant content. In response, the project is being expanded across additional veterinary and animal science units.

13E EMERGING INITIATIVE

RETENTION

Transforming early outreach for student success: Implementing stream

Mr Matt Hingston, A/Prof Jane Skalicky
University of Tasmania

This paper reports how implementation of a student engagement analytics system (stream) has transformed long-standing early outreach practices. We worked collaboratively with academics from each key study area to interrogate and re-shape a well-embedded early intervention model with the affordances of stream. New initiatives that enhanced student success emerged from this project, including academic integrity and academic progress. Analysis has evidenced positive outcomes for both student experience and retention and for staff. The presentation will outline progress of the stream project, early outcomes and future plans.

13F EMERGING INITIATIVE

AchieVeU to NeuroNavi: An Equity-Led, Neurodivergent-Informed Transition Practice

Robert Worrell
Victoria University

NeuroNavi is a peer-led initiative co-designed by neurodivergent students at Victoria University to support neurodivergent learners' transition, belonging, and help-seeking. Emerging from the AchieVeU equity-led mentoring model, it responds to onboarding data showing many students identify as neurodivergent and report transition-related challenges. Neurodivergent mentors run workshops and drop-ins that centre lived experience, share practical strategies, and foster self-advocacy in a validating, non-clinical space.

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11:20AM - 11:50AM
PARALLEL SESSION

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14A EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Structure, Relevance, Success: A Two-Year Journey Transforming First Year Anatomy & Physiology

Dr Louise Pemberton
CSU

It is well known that students transition to university from a range of backgrounds and Transition Pedagogy provides a framework to support all students as they transition through first year. Here, we demonstrate how generic, foundational anatomy and physiology can be made relevant at scale in large service taught subjects, using a cohort of 1,000 students from twelve different health courses. By creating a structured, engaging, and interactive learning environment with high quality, discipline-contextualised resources, we show significant improvements in student satisfaction and student success.

14B EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

Low hanging fruit: Cost of living support

Clare Senior, Tennille Trevaskis
UWA

Student financial wellbeing is fundamental to academic success, retention, and equity of access. With widespread increased cost of living disproportionately impacting students, a suite of Cost of living initiatives were implemented including: providing accessible free and low cost healthy food for students during semester, at events and throughout exams; raising awareness of available financial supports; and piloting a bursary for international students undertaking unpaid internships. The specific initiatives and lessons learnt are explored.

14C EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Exploring Whether Chatbots Can Enhance Critical Thinking, Communication and Clinical Reasoning in Nursing Students

Tran Dinh-Le, Kathryn Fogarty, Marko Antic, Amelia Di Paolo, Dr Caroline Havery,
Dr Leila Gholizadeh, Vicki Ibbotson, Dr Elizabeth Brogan
University of Technology Sydney

Scaling authentic, low-stakes opportunities for students to practice complex reasoning and communication skills is an ongoing challenge in contemporary higher education. This project investigates the use of a customised artificial intelligence (AI) chatbot as an accessible and flexible learning tool that guides students through structured virtual scenarios. Implemented in an undergraduate nursing program, the chatbot offers opportunities to practice clinical reasoning, communication, and decision-making skills while also supporting the development of ethical and critical AI literacy. Preliminary evaluation indicates increased student confidence, engagement, and reflective learning, with identified opportunities to enhance scenario realism and instructional clarity. Overall, the initiative demonstrates the potential of conversational AI to provide an inclusive and scalable model that strengthens early preparation for professional learning environments. More broadly, it contributes to Transition Pedagogy by offering a transferable approach that supports students' emotional, academic, and professional transitions into practice.

14D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Raising feedback monsters responsibly

Mrs Rebekah Couper, Dr Danay Baker-Andresen
UniSC

As higher education increasingly adopts programmatic assessment, developing students' feedback literacy is critical to success. This emerging initiative describes a collaboration to enhance students' feedback literacy through scalable, curriculum-embedded and aligned interventions. Guided by the Curriculum of Success framework, Learning Advisers co-designed short, customisable teaching activities and resources for delivery by teaching staff in two first-year School of Health courses to assist students' engagement with and application of feedback across assessment tasks. This mixed-methods pilot evaluated academic performance and the perspectives of students, teaching staff and Learning Advisers. We will also discuss feedback as a dialogic process and how the pilot impacted staff feedback literacy and dialogic effectiveness.

14E EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

"I just clicked and hoped": Website redesign with student success in mind

Megan Pozzi, Denise McTaggart
UniSO

University websites play a vital role in student success by serving as centralised hubs for information related to academic, wellbeing, and administrative support. In this paper, we describe the findings from a multi-phased approach to redesigning the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) student website using a user-centric design approach with students. We position university websites as a critical and often overlooked component of supporting student success.

14F EMERGING INITIATIVE

ACHIEVEMENT

Industry-engaged graduate research: Widening HDR participation through a Graduate Certificate pathway at CQUniversity

Dr Grant Andrews, Dr Barbra Zupan, Dr Adam Rose, Dr Charlotte Gupta
CQUniversity

CQUniversity's Graduate Certificate in Research (GCR) is an equity-focused, industry-engaged pathway into higher degrees by research (HDR). The GCR responds to policy concerns about under-representation of equity groups in HDR and growing expectations that research training be more industry-relevant and impactful. In 2026, the GCR was redesigned to enhance its strengths through an innovative approach to graduate research training: a fully online, hyperflexible and industry-relevant pathway certificate that scaffolds candidates from research fundamentals to a capstone proposal or rapid review. Distinctive features are the links to industry-relevant research areas and a "Working with Industry" intensive. Combined with hyperflexible delivery and integrated support, the GCR aims to widen HDR participation for working professionals, regional students and first-in-family learners, while preparing them for industry-connected research.

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15A REFEREED PAPER STUDENTS

Reading the Room: Understanding Student Approaches to Respectful Behaviour in Informal Study Space on Campus

Sascha Jenkins
CDU

Catharine Pruscino, Caitlin Austin-Kanafani, Daniel Hamilton, Jasmine Lewin
UTS

The National Student Safety Survey 2021 identifies libraries as one of the main places where sexual harassment occurs on campus, with little research undertaken into the nature, cause and prevention of sexual harassment or disrespectful behaviour in Australian university libraries and informal learning spaces. This study aims to understand the experiences and perceptions of the University of Technology Sydney community on safety and disrespectful behaviour. Our research draws on physical, societal and cultural ideas of safe spaces, examining how students interpret and regulate respectful and disrespectful behaviour in informal study spaces, and how these practices align with staff understandings of institutional prevention strategies. Drawing on interviews with students and staff, and student workshops to test and refine insights, we identify 'reading the room' as a dominant practice for students in normalising behaviour in informal learning environments. This paper discusses the insights gained and how these might impact and shape engagement in the prevention space on university campuses.

15B EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Student perceptions of what is important for success

Dr Rebecca J Bird, Dr Stephen G Scott
University of Otago

Universities have traditionally emphasised attendance as a key contributor to student engagement and academic success. However, the COVID-19 pandemic disrupted established norms, accelerating reliance on asynchronous learning and reshaping student behaviours and expectations. This study examines first-year student perceptions of the relative importance of attendance, engagement, motivation, and wellbeing for academic success. Data were collected over three years using anonymous polling during O Week. Students prioritised motivation and wellbeing, while attendance is identified by < 5%. These findings suggest a potential misalignment between student perceptions and institutional expectations.

15C EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

Supporting Every Learner: Developing an Inclusive Peer-Leader Training Model Through Cross-Campus Collaboration

Jules Page, Souad Ahmen
Murdoch University

This emerging initiative explores the development of a structured, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)-informed professional development model (Murdoch University, 2023) for Peer Assisted Study Session (PASS) Leaders and Peer Academic Coaches (PACs). In response to increasing student diversity and engagement with peer-learning programs, the initiative aims to equip peer leaders to support students with varied identities, backgrounds, and learning needs. The model integrates specialist-led training in cultural awareness, accessibility, neurodiversity, and inclusive communication, alongside experiential learning and reflective practice (Kolb, 2015). It extends existing frameworks through cross-campus collaboration and targeted inclusion training and invites discussion on enhancing inclusive student success across institutions.

15D EMERGING INITIATIVE ACHIEVEMENT

Simplifying rubric design to improve marker efficiency and reliability in online assessment: An action research study

A/Prof Tracey Ahern, Tracey Gooding
JCU

This paper reports on the methodology and findings of a course level action research project undertaken to design, trial, and refine a simplified assessment rubric aimed at improving marker experience, enhancing grading efficiency, and strengthening inter-rater reliability. The study outlines key insights gained through the iterative research process and presents the resulting streamlined rubric, which has since been adopted widely across the course.

15E EMERGING INITIATIVE

STUDENTS

From trauma aware to trauma responsive: A framework for trauma-informed and empathetic student support

Miss Melanie Downs, Mrs Sarah Irvine, Mrs Kacie Fahey
UniSO

There is an ever-increasing number of students presenting with trauma experiences and symptoms. Universities have a role in effectively supporting students with trauma if they want to successfully attract and retain students (Schroeder et al., 2023). With the Australian Universities Accord (Department of Education, 2024) championing widening participation efforts, it would be remiss of higher education institutions to ignore the role they play in addressing the inequalities and barriers faced by students with trauma experiences. This emerging initiative explores how UniSO's Student Learning Advising team tailored Trauma Informed Care Principles (TICPs) into a bespoke trauma-informed framework for their unique-positioning within the Academy to move beyond trauma awareness toward trauma responsiveness, with early results showing more comprehensive support benefiting the overall student experience. The framework serves as a practical, toolkit to support third space practitioners in embedding TICP across the higher education sector.

15F EMERGING INITIATIVE

SUCCESS

Ready23GO: Tracking Student Employability Confidence Over a Degree

Lynda O'Sullivan, Michael Wright, Karen Young, Sophie McKenzie
Deakin University

Ready123GO (R123GO) is a curriculum-led, technology-enabled Work Integrated Learning (WIL) intervention within Deakin's Science, Engineering and Built Environment (SEBE) faculty. R123GO tracks and enhances student employability confidence against Deakin's Graduate Learning Outcomes (GLOs) across the student lifecycle. The approach supports long-term workforce preparation and enables data-informed reflection and change for staff. Responding to sector calls for scalable, authentic employability learning, R123GO integrates "Employability Confidence Check-ins" (ECCs) into existing assessments. The ECC requires students to rate their confidence against employability-focused, GLO-aligned statements at multiple points across their degree, and justify their responses using evidence. Students also reflect on their broader employability awareness and the value of the ECC. In addition, optional GLO-aligned employability literacy modules can be embedded within units to further strengthen student employability awareness and development.

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1:30PM - 2:00PM
PARALLEL SESSION

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16B EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Igniting the NeuroSpark: A student-designed peer learning program for neurodivergent students at a Queensland regional university

Kacie Fahey, Alexis Van Fleet, Sharni Ashwell
UniSQ

As approaches to widening participation grow in Higher Education Institutions (HEIs), the need for student-led solutions has never been more significant. If HEIs are committed to genuine 'students at the centre' approaches, then they must provide adequate, strengths-based, student-led supports to the marginalised cohorts that are specifically targeted by widening participation measures (Coyle et al., 2025; Ross et al., 2026). Neurodivergent students are one such cohort. Ross et al. (2026) notes that despite the increases in neurodivergent student enrolments, HEIs have room for improvement in supporting this cohort. This emerging initiative discusses UniSQ's project to develop a strengths-based, student-led, peer learning program that aims to enhance neurodivergent students' academic skills and study self-efficacy. Feedback from the program's first 12 months indicates the effectiveness of the program and its 'students as experts' approach. Furthermore, these insights provide feedforward opportunities that enable the program to remain agile and flexible to student needs.

16C INDUSTRY SUBMISSION SUCCESS

Ultimate student success: Developing critical graduate attributes at scale in an AI-enabled higher education experience

Chris Fitzpatrick, Matt Henderson
Studiosity

This Industry Showcase examines how strategic partnerships between higher education institutions and Studiosity support student success at scale, including the integration of 24/7 student support as well as the validation of student learning in the age of AI. This showcase demonstrates how evidence-led interventions directly improve retention, academic performance, and learner confidence, by drawing on three distinct collaborative projects from across the globe: 1) The 2026 Australian Student Wellbeing Report conducted by YouGov and reported by Studiosity; 2) a large-scale longitudinal study of six UK universities (Mace, 2025); and 3) a pilot undertaken by the National Institute of Student Success (NISS) at Georgia State University (GSU) (Renick & Crowther, 2026). Key findings include a 12.2% increase in retention for high-users of the platform (Mace, 2025) and 30.9% reduction in DFW ("D" grade, Fail, Withdrawal) rates at GSU (Renick & Crowther, 2026). This paper also addresses the emerging challenge of student anxiety relating to AI detection, with 78% of Australian students fearing false accusations of academic misconduct (Studiosity & YouGov, 2026). This paper contextualizes these findings within current debates on academic integrity and student wellbeing, outlining a shift from punitive surveillance models to a developmental "Support and Validate" framework designed to protect student agency and restore institutional trust.

16D EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Feedforward-Feedback Model: Enhancing Feedback Literacy in a Large First-Year Health Course

Dr May El Haddad
UniSC

Feedback literacy, students' capacity to seek, interpret, and act on feedback, is essential for learning and professional practice in health education (Carless & Boud, 2018). This emerging initiative reports on a 'Feedforward-Feedback Model' implemented in a large first-year, multi-campus health course. The model addresses two persistent challenges: inconsistent feedback across multiple markers and limited student engagement with feedback between assessments. It strengthens feedback design, consistency, and usability while embedding structured reflection and feedforward between tasks. The presentation will outline the model and invite discussion on scalable approaches to enhancing feedback literacy in large courses.

16E REFEREED PAPER RETENTION

Enhancing Student Retention through the Implementation of Academic Teaching and Learning Interventions

Marty Schmude, Ingrid Harrington, Robert Whannell, Cat Johnston, Kristy O'Neill,
Rachael Adlington, Harrison Munday, Sarita Guy
UNE

Student attrition at Australian universities has been an ongoing concern and focus for academic research, as attempts to reduce student attrition remains dire despite substantial expenditure of funds by the Australian government and universities over many years. This article describes the five-year evolution of the student support model at an Australian regional university. The model has moved away from historical approaches involving the outsourcing of student support and the intervention of professional staff external to the core teaching and learning function, to an academic-centric model. A range of evidence-based innovative tools are used to facilitate the enhanced presence of academics in their teaching and engagement with students, namely the national award-winning Commencing Student Success Project (CSSP), and university program Atrium, are described. Future recommendations for all educators provide ways forward to improving the student experience, engagement and retention.

16F EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

Project RESPECT: Implementation of the student training package in response to the National Code

Dr Gemma Mann, Dr Portia Simelane, Tania Wissemann, Tiff Blake, Dr Michael Dzator
CQU

In 2025, the federal government introduced the National Higher Education Code to Prevent and Respond to Gender-based Violence (GBV). Our CQUniversity team was well positioned and enthusiastic to develop the required training and to include other aspects in a comprehensive package, acknowledging its importance in ensuring students’ safety and success. In March 2026 we released the training package to all students as they commenced the new year. We also took the opportunity to develop a research plan to align with the requirement to evaluate the training. Using the Kirkpatrick framework for evaluation (Kirkpatrick & Kirkpatrick, 2016) we investigated the effectiveness of the package in enhancing knowledge and understanding of GBV concepts and reporting mechanisms. Preliminary findings showed a significantly high level of satisfaction with the module and increases in knowledge and perceived skills. These results are relevant to all higher education providers looking to implement training that supports student safety.

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2:10PM - 2:40PM
PARALLEL SESSION

17

17A EMERGING INITIATIVE TRANSITIONS

Closing the loop: Graduation Portfolio as a capstone transition-out experience for science students

Dr Helena Pacitti, Tom Rowlands, Lakia Turner, A/Prof Shannan Maisey
UNSW

Science graduates are recognised for strong analytical, technical, and problem-solving skills, yet often struggle to articulate their capabilities and transferable skills to employers. SCIF3010 Graduation Portfolio is a compulsory, zero-unit-of-credit capstone course embedded within SciConnect, UNSW Science's degree-spanning professional development platform. Grounded in Kift's (2023) transition pedagogy and Bennett's (2020) employability framework, SCIF3010 guides final-year Bachelor of Science and Bachelor of Advanced Science students to consolidate their graduate identity, explore target industries, and communicate their value as science professionals. This paper outlines the course's rationale, design, and inaugural implementation, and invites discussion on embedding capstone employability experiences within generalist undergraduate programs.

17B EMERGING INITIATIVE SUCCESS

Universal Design for Learning as a Strategic Use of the Disability Support Fund: Improving Outcomes for Students with Disability

A/Prof Kelly Linden, Dr Noelia Roman, Ms Samantha Tiernan
CSU

Universal Design for Learning (UDL) enhances engagement for students with disability by providing consistent structure, multiple modes of access, and clearer assessment, which collectively reduce cognitive load and support diverse learning needs. For academics, UDL functions as a workload saving approach reducing student confusion and the volume of individual adjustments. Implementing UDL in a university environment marked by time poor academic staff and institutional budget pressures requires a strategy that emphasises efficiency. Positioning UDL as a protective, time efficient teaching practice is essential when job insecurity and competing priorities heighten resistance to new initiatives. A targeted implementation plan centred on small, high impact design changes and ready to use templates was developed. Framing UDL as a way to improve teaching quality, reduce adjustments, and increase student success provides a compelling rationale for academics and leadership during periods of organisational constraint.

17C EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

Creative, Student-Centred Approaches to Academic Integrity Education in the Age of Generative AI

Dr Megan Axelsen, Dr Chris Zehntner
UniSQ

Generative AI has increased the prevalence of both intentional and unintentional breaches of academic integrity, driving demand for targeted academic integrity education. At UniSQ, we are shifting from compliance focused messaging to a creative, student centred, educative approach. Drawing on TEQSA good practice principles, we developed a visually engaging narrative-driven suite of resources, including visual mini-cases, interactive infographics, a short video, and an assessment task sheet with embedded guidance, all designed to reduce cognitive load, increase clarity, and spark curiosity.

17E EMERGING INITIATIVE STUDENTS

Transforming educators' frustration into self-efficacy: An emerging initiative using holistic, ecological perspectives on student support and emotional labour

Ana Larsen
CQU

Educators working in the coalface with diverse student groups often experience deep frustration as they navigate the emotional labour of supporting students within increasingly neoliberal higher education systems. These educators sit closest to students' challenges yet hold the least structural power to address the systemic barriers. This can result in frustration, feelings of powerlessness and reduced self-efficacy among educators. This emerging initiative maps how holistic, ecological frameworks—specifically Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory and Kahu and Nelson's student engagement framework—offer powerful tools for reframing educator self-efficacy in this context. By mapping the potential spheres of influence this author offers strategies for educators to alleviate the frustration which can accompany the emotional labour of supporting diverse students. This includes recognising agency, acknowledging the legitimacy and impact of their emotional labour and clarifying the structural constraints that shape practice. The presentation concludes with some practical strategies for educators to use ecological thinking to foster their self-efficacy by choosing practices which are most likely to have the greatest impact on students.

17F EMERGING INITIATIVE ACHIEVEMENT

Reflection as preparation: Co-designing stigma education for interdisciplinary MH/AOD placements

Alsa Wu, Thomas Connell, Dr Beng Eu, Dr Chris Groot, Dr Keiran Allen, Lisa Wright, Campbell McKay, Carolyn Cracknell, Dr Kim Allison, Denise Ho, Victoria Rayner
UoM

Students undertaking mental health (MH) and alcohol and other drug (AOD) placements often receive limited preparation for recognising how stigma affects care and practice. This is particularly relevant for students from health and social care professions undertaking placements in multidisciplinary MH/AOD settings. To address this gap, an interdisciplinary team of educators, researchers, and practitioners co-designed a Lived-Experience-Informed Stigma Reduction module, informed by the ReSPECT model. The presentation will share evidence from student feedback, co-design insights, early piloting findings and emerging project impacts. This initiative highlights the need to integrate MH/AOD stigma education across professions involved in care.

NOTES

KEYNOTE PRESENTATION

WEDNESDAY 1 JULY 2026

3:10PM - 4:10PM

MINYAMA 1 & 2



Professor Danny Liu

Professor of Educational Technologies (Education Focused)
The University of Sydney

Biography

Danny is a molecular biologist by training, programmer by night, researcher and academic developer by day, and educator at heart. A multiple international and national teaching award winner, he is Professor of Educational Technologies at the University of Sydney. Danny works at the confluence of educational technology, student engagement, artificial intelligence, learning analytics, pedagogical research, organisational leadership, and professional development. He is currently a Professor in the Educational Innovation team at the University of Sydney.

Danny co-chairs Sydney University's AI in Education working group and leads the Cogniti.ai initiative that puts educators in the driver's seat of AI. Most recently he has been coordinating the development of the Castlereagh Statement, a world leading, trans-sector approach to reframing education in the age of AI.

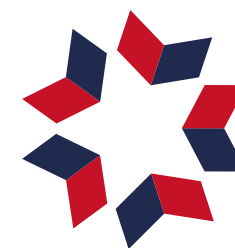
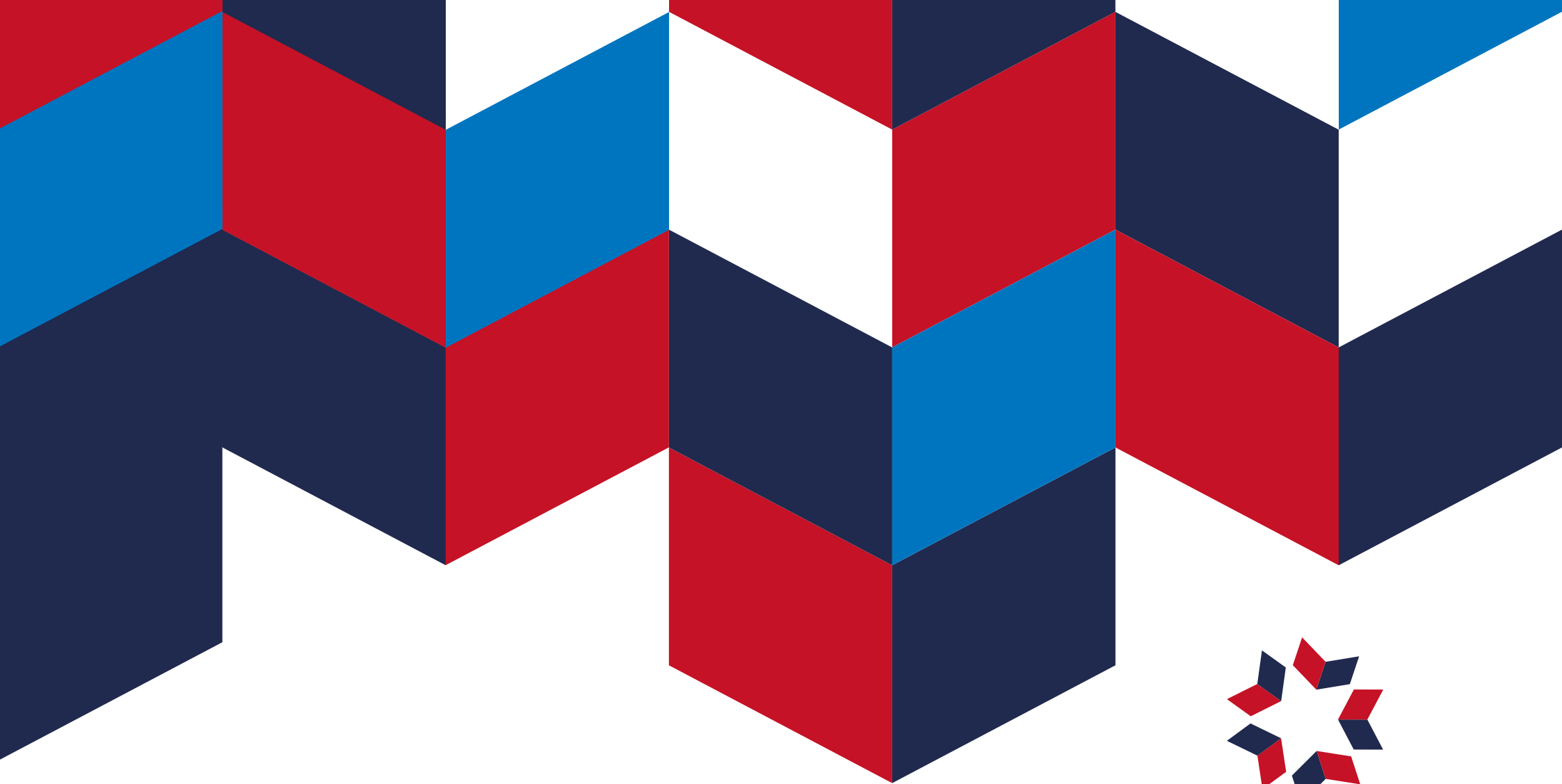
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CONFERENCE VENUE

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Twin Waters
QLD 4564



*Program subject to minor change, current at time of printing.



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