

Abstracts – Workshops

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Successes occurring for enabling students that the data isn't showing. Is it time to revisit the definition of 'success' to be more inclusive?

Kirsten Allen. University of Newcastle

Amidst the increasing marketization of Universities, standards of 'success' in higher education are often objectified by quantifiable data such as grades attained, units passed and degree completion within a linear progression. However, in this definition, achievement is determined through rationalistic measures that are more easily achievable to a certain 'type' of student, or those who fit within the dominant 'mainstream'. Although enabling programs aren't designed exclusively to attract non-traditional students, nonetheless around half of the enrolments identify as 'non-traditional'. Therefore, if success is determined in the same prescriptive manner that favours the dominant, mainstream, this is problematic. Firstly, considering that a key rationale of enabling education is to address existing inequalities and challenge the exclusivity of traditional educational spaces, it is contradictory to determine success through a method that is favouring a certain 'type' of student – one that arguably, exemplifies middle-class cultural values. Ironically, this can unwittingly reproduce the same inequalities that the enabling programs are attempting to address. Secondly, if success is determined in this objective manner, it is reasonable to question the label reserved for those who do not achieve it. If the only other option is 'failure', this is a powerful disservice to the many non-traditional students who 'risk' enabling education, who enjoy a development of knowledge, self-efficacy, aspiration and opportunity, who experience educational outcomes valuable to the student as stakeholder, but who don't 'tick the boxes' of educational outcomes valued within the neo-liberal sphere. Dealing with a range of hardships that non-traditional students will often bring to the classroom, students may progress through tertiary education in a non-linear manner, perform multiple attempts, enrol and withdraw numerous times, or engage in the learning experience but don't 'pass' due to a range of factors. Yet in the data, these students are deemed 'failures' regardless of the enrichment of that experience.

Would a success of enabling programs be to treat success in enabling programs differently? Motivated by this equity issue, I have commenced a PhD exploring the successes occurring for enabling students that the data isn't showing, and positing that it is time to revisit the definition of 'success' to be more inclusive. This could help ensure that despite an individual's context, positive experiences from education are celebrated and recognised as valuable to the stakeholder, rather than being discredited through neo-liberal discourses that value only those outcomes that help serve political and economic agendas.

Learning Objectives:

- To examine some of the contemporary literature to explore the treatment of success in a range of tertiary contexts
- To identify equity issues surrounding current definitions of success
- To workshop what success is to the enabling student and gain perspectives from enabling educators
- To workshop how enabling programs can address issues of equity regarding the treatment of success

Summary of Activities:

- Small group discussion of key readings and findings (to be presented in summary form)
- Small group presentation – case study of a student – what would success be for this student according to: a) the readings and b) the group?

- Whole group reflection – what equity issues have these case studies revealed regarding policy? Where do we go from here?

Individual written reflection – what is the definition of success to you? How can enabling programs address issues of equity regarding treatment of student success?

NAEEA Research, Development and Collaboration Special Interest Group.

Anna Bennett. University of Newcastle.

This workshop is for NAEEA Research Development and Collaboration Special Interest Group (SIG) members and interested guests. This is the second meeting of the newly established SIG and the convenor will provide an update on developments since the first meeting, which took place in June this year. The workshop is organised around two different projects and multimedia as stimulus to generate discussion about research. It commences with a brief outline of the SIG convenor's two recent research projects. The session provides an opportunity for active learning and development around the conference theme of 'Enabling Learning and Enabling Teaching'.

The first activity focuses on online CPD resources funded by the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) in 2016-2017 and developed out of a study of student capability, funded by the National Centre of Student Equity in Higher Education (2015). The research and online resources are the first of their kind that focus on how judgements of capability powerfully determine students' aspirations for, and development within, higher education (Burke, et al., 2015). They draw on other research that interrogates assumptions about ability and talent (Burke et al, 2015; Bennett and Burke, 2017; Southgate and Bennett, 2014; Burke and McManus, 2009). The resources were designed to enable the development of conceptual tools for teachers and practitioners to better recognise and, therefore, develop student capability. This part of the session will be discussion focussed, with conversation stimulus generated from one of the short conceptual films and reflective exercises.

The second activity will be focussed on theorising main themes that emerged out of a 2017 study of enabling pedagogies at the University of Newcastle, NSW. The project sought to make explicit and visible the findings from interviews with the 30 staff and 21 students who participated. This is the first time this kind of research focussed on theorising the overarching pedagogical approaches in enabling programs at UON (which have been operating for 43 years) has been undertaken.

Overall, the workshop aims to develop the participants' knowledge of educational research and theory, and, through discussion of the two projects, provide them with strategies for conducting research with impact. The workshop activities aim to provide conversation points and insights that contribute to building educational approaches, and showcase empirical research and theory to improve understanding of important aspects of both enabling education and education in general.

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Recognising and developing student capability.

Anna Bennett, Penny-Jane Burke & Catherine Burgess. University of Newcastle.

This workshop presentation concentrates on the conference theme: ‘Enabling Learning and Enabling Teaching’. The presentation offers insights into the complex dynamics underpinning what it means to be capable of learning in higher education (HE) and how misunderstandings around capability generate recurring inequities in education. The concepts shared come from our online continuing professional development (CPD) resources, in the form of/including short films, which are based on research examining inequity in higher education in Australia and the UK (Burke et al., 2015; Bennett and Burke, 2017; Southgate and Bennett, 2014; Burke and McManus, 2009).

In particular, the resources draw on data from our recent study of HE student and staff views of capability at an Australian regional institution, documented in our report Capability, Belonging and Equity in Higher Education: developing inclusive approaches (Burke et al., 2015).

The CPD is offered to teachers and WP practitioners to reflect on their work in relation to the different types of stimulus provided in the resources, as we argue that it is important to recognise that self/other judgements of capability are dynamic, contextual and iteratively re/developed in relation to others and according to different and changing contexts. It is therefore important to pay attention to the pedagogical aspects of the development of capability within a field.

The films were funded by the Centre of Excellence for Equity in Higher Education (CEEHE) in 2016-2017, and designed to enable the development of enabling teachers/practitioners’ understandings to better recognise, and therefore develop, student capability. The session will be focussed on a selection of the short conceptual films and think piece reflection exercises to enable shared learning from the presentation, film stimulus, and from and between attendees.

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Benchmarking enabling programs: A step towards a quality framework.

Charmaine Davis (University of Southern Queensland), Suzi Syme (Southern Cross University) & Chris Cook (Central Queensland University)

This workshop will discuss the process used by three universities to benchmark key features of their enabling programs with a particular focus on addressing the issues of quality, equivalence and equitability. We hope to contribute to efforts to address the lack of a formal national standard in this area. By sharing the process we followed, participants will gain insights into how to conduct their own benchmarking processes to improve student and staff experiences, and advance learning outcomes.

The diversity of enabling programs in the higher education sector has been the focus of considerable attention in recent times, and drawing reliable comparisons between these programs has sometimes proved challenging. Enabling education has occupied a long standing place within the higher education sector in Australia, and the significance of enabling programs has only increased with moves to widen participation of underrepresented groups in tertiary education (Lisciandro & Gibbs, 2016). Enabling programs are not regulated by the Australian Qualifications Framework structure, and have been developed by a wide range of universities to meet the needs of their own student cohorts and university undergraduate admission requirements, resulting in considerable program diversity. Pitman et al (2016) conclude that there is a lack of transparency which makes comparisons between programs problematic and limits the mobility of enabling students across institutions.

There have been a limited number of projects which have set out to address this issue by developing frameworks to compare enabling programs across the sector. The 2013 report by Hodges et al included a comparative study of enabling programs across five participating institutions to examine the issues of student attrition and progression, while Baker and Irwin (2015) conducted an audit of how 27 universities approached academic language and literacies instruction within their enabling programs. A collaborative Australian Government Office of Learning and Teaching project involving three universities is currently underway by Relf, Shah and Sharp and has as its focus the curriculum design principles underpinning enabling programs.

Our project benchmarks key features of the enabling programs offered by CQUniversity, Southern Cross University and the University of Southern Queensland. This workshop will present the process we used to approach this task that was undertaken in a systematic and collaborative way, underpinned by an ethical agreement (Morgan & Taylor, 2012).

Our workshop will include:

- a brainstorming activity about concepts and experiences of benchmarking
- a group activity on appropriate guidelines to set up a benchmarking project
- a group activity on what to benchmark
- a group activity on how to benchmark
- a reporting back activity as a group.

Preliminary findings of our benchmarking project will be presented. Ideas for a national framework will be discussed.

Discussion of an effective benchmarking framework will provide a useful means of comparing enabling programs, highlighting commonalities and differences in teaching practices, curriculum design, assessment, learning and teaching arrangements and student support processes at a national level. These benchmarking initiatives may contribute to the recognition of broadly accepted standards in enabling education to improve outcomes for students, staff and institutions, while also providing an effective mechanism to advocate for the ongoing success of our rich and diverse enabling programs in Australia.

Acknowledgements

Professor Janet Taylor, Director, Southern Cross University College, SCU; Mr David Bull, Director, Open Access College, USQ; Ms Karen Seary, Associate Dean, School of Access Education, CQUniversity.

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Useful servant, dangerous master: A multi-faceted critical engagement with online and blended enabling education.

Evonne Irwin, Emma Hamilton & Holly Dillon (University of Newcastle) Anthea Fudge, Jennifer Stokes & Tanya Weiler (University of South of Australia); Karen McRae (Sydney Institute of Business & Technology)

The rapid proliferation of educational technologies and the increasing uptake of online and blended learning as flexible modes of study for both students and higher education institutions bring multiple challenges for enabling educators. This workshop—presented by members of the NAEAA’s SIG for Online Learning—offers critical understandings of the pedagogies and practices involved in teaching and learning in online and blended enabling spaces.

Participants will engage in discussion and digitally-facilitated activities around significant issues encountered and investigated in online and blended learning in three institutions offering enabling programs: the University of Newcastle (UON); UniSA College; and Sydney Institute of Business and Technology (SIBT). The issues presented are multi-faceted and cover retention/attrition discourses; approaches to student care; staff–technology–student relationships; and academic integrity in online environments.

Facilitators from UON will examine the current rhetorical dialogue between ‘hard’ data of student retention and attrition and ‘soft’ data—the voices of students as they engage with an online enabling program. This will allow for greater insight into and discussion of student success within enabling education programs and the potential ruptures between institutional definitions of ‘success’ and students’ own assessments of their capabilities, successes and the meanings of education.

UON will also examine the role of a holistic, ‘whole of program’ approach to student care and belonging within online enabling environments as a way to improve student experiences and learning outcomes. It suggests methods of student support that are distinct to online, and challenges traditional binaries between ‘teaching’ and ‘support’ services and staff.

UniSA College facilitators explore digital praxis and pedagogy from a multidisciplinary perspective. Through analysis of survey results from enabling educators, alongside observations from their own teaching practice, they will outline academic perspectives on digital learning. Guided by Prensky’s work on digital wisdom (2012), they will offer insight into the relationship between educators, technology and students in a digital context. They will share their initial findings, including the ways in which enabling programs offer opportunities to engage students through digital technology, alongside the subsequent shifts in practice which are necessary for effective digital learning.

A facilitator from SIBT will engage in the contentious issue of academic integrity in a blended course offering. While various tools are now available to facilitate online assessments, academic integrity can still be problematic. In-class written practice and revision tasks are submitted, reviewed and stored on the online learning platform (Moodle). However, final assessments are completed as an in-class task on paper under exam conditions to ensure that students are assessed on their own skills, not someone else’s. This approach has enabled teachers to adopt current online learning and teaching practice, while still having full confidence in students’ final scores.

Participants attending this workshop are offered the opportunity to: learn from the experiences and empirical work from UON, UniSA College and SIBT; take home useful tips for their own practice; and engage in critical and meaningful discussion and activities around the issues presented.

Dip your toe in! Enabling opportunities for students to test drive digital technologies.

Trixie James & Katrina Johnston. Central Queensland University.

Technology has had a significant impact on education and in today's learning environment, learners enjoy the advantages of blended learning opportunities or fully online units that require a certain level of digital literacy. For many students entering an enabling pathway, there is a notable gap between their level of competency with computer technologies and actual digital fluency to navigate new and emerging technologies. There are a small number of digital immigrants who continue to remain reluctant adopters of any technologies that are new. To overcome this concern, digital technologies were introduced into Positive Learning for University (PLU) as an opportunity for students to trial a range of digital technologies whilst completing the unit. The challenge faced in Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Pathways (STEPS) is that only a small proportion of students enrol in PLU; therefore, not all students have the opportunity to develop this higher level of technological competency. Therefore, a program was designed that was open for all students from STEPS to undergraduates, to learn about specific technologies that they may be required to navigate within their degree. A website was created and information sheets have been added to the University's Academic Learning Centre Site for students to access.

This workshop will follow the Review, Connect, Extend, Apply (RCEA) approach (James 2015) to share the innovative technological aspects and engage the audience using active learning. Participants will be asked to access a smart device or laptop in order to participate in the workshop.

Review: Presenters will introduce the structure of the workshop and briefly share background information around STEPS and the introduction of technologies into PLU. The first hands-on activity will consider the range of technologies that are used in today's university environment.

Connect: To actively involve participants, a gamification activity will be undertaken to seek knowledge around the learner's competence and confidence with various forms of technology. The results of the game will be discussed and participants will consider how the technologies could be utilised in their educational setting.

Extend: Presenters will share the innovative ways that the digital technologies were embedded into PLU; review the implications, both positive and negative, on students and educators; and reflect on changes that have occurred since its introduction to the unit.

Apply: Participants will be given an opportunity to peruse the website and review the various technologies that are introduced throughout. Participants will consider how they could apply different technologies into their teaching approaches that will further engage their students.

Future research opportunities exist around investigating the digital skills gap between students entering the STEPS enabling program and the level of digital literacy required in the undergraduate arena to see if there is an obvious chasm and/or a real obstacle to learning for those not fluent in digital literacy. There is also anecdotal evidence that a chasm exists between lecturers/tutors capability in supporting students through new and emerging technologies which will also be investigated.

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Evolution or revolution in the enabling space? Reforming developmental education in the United States.

Emily Lardner (Grays Harbor College, United States of America) & Rachel Singer (Achieving the Dream Inc., United States of America).

The conference themes of the 6th Biennial National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia Conference resonate deeply with evolutions, or perhaps revolutions, in pre-college programs—designed to help students move into undergraduate courses and degree programs. In the US approximately one-third of all entering students enroll in at least one developmental course and in community colleges closer to two-thirds of entering students participate in these precollege courses/programs (*US Dept of Education).

As is the case in Australia, where “a greater proportion of students enrolled in and transition via enabling pathways are from recognised equity groups than any of the other sub-bachelor pathways examined” (Pathways to Higher Education: the Efficacy of Enabling and Sub-Bachelor Pathways for Disadvantaged Students 2015), so too are low socio-economic status students, students with disabilities, students from non-English speaking backgrounds, students from ethnic and racial groups historically underserved by higher education over-represented in ‘developmental’ programs in the United States. Advancing learning, increasing success in and through enabling programs is critical.

In the past ten years, colleges across the US have focused on strategies for increasing students’ academic literacy and numeracy skills through curricular and pedagogical reforms (acceleration, pathway, co-requisite, contextualized). Placement practices have been redesigned along with curriculum, and it’s safe to say that developmental education has evolved. Revolutionary change requires a deeper framing of the rights of students to a high-quality education. In a time of actual cuts to public services including education, educators who champion the rights of learners are under enormous pressure inside and outside campuses.

In this workshop, we’ll present a model we’ve begun to use in working with campuses committed to increasing student success, particularly in the enabling space. At Using Evidence for Improvement: the Teaching and Learning National Institute, we help campuses integrate new insights about learning and how it informs the ways we work with students; research on what makes professional development effective; and strategies for using multiple forms of evidence to determine necessary changes.

Objective: The primary learning objectives for this workshop are to introduce participants to current movements to advance learning and student success within the US equivalent of enabling education programs, and to consider the ways in which the social, political, and economic forces at play at this historical moment makes that work complicated and more critical.

Activities: We will give an overview of recent publications that demonstrate the widespread nature of the curricular and pedagogical reforms underway across the US as well as demographic information about the students participating in those programs. Within that context, we will describe one critical shift in thinking and practice—the development of math pathways as a departure from a traditional calculus-based model, to exemplify the nature of the conversation about advancing learning and to highlight the challenges campuses in the US face as they work towards implementing that kind of deep change. We’ll also share the assignment designed for campus teams working to implement a project like pathways, aimed at advancing learning, and invite participants to consider the ways in which approach like this—a residential institute for cross-role campus teams—is useful for overall change efforts.

Indigenous students Special Interest Group launch and workshop.

Sharlene Leroy-Dyer. University of Newcastle.

In June 2017, the executive of NAAEA approved the establishment of an Indigenous Students Special Interest Group (SIG). Given the increasing numbers of Indigenous students within the enabling education programs in Australia, it is even more important to develop understanding about Indigenous pedagogical approaches through sharing ideas about existing practices, as well as seeking opportunities to develop innovative new practices to assist Indigenous enabling students navigate the system. This SIG was developed by Dr Sharlene Leroy-Dyer, (Sharlene.leroy-dyer@newcastle.edu.au), who is the Program Convenor of the Yapug enabling program at the University of Newcastle.

If you are interested in Indigenous enabling programs or helping students from Indigenous backgrounds within mainstream enabling programs then this SIG is for you. The focus will be on Indigenous pedagogical approaches to teaching in enabling programs and culturally appropriate ways to assist Indigenous students navigate enabling programs, incorporating Indigenous ways of learning, being, knowing and doing. The Indigenous students SIG is open to academic and professional staff.

What Aboriginal peoples bring to this space is our history, politics, discourses, social practices and knowledge's; it is how we come to understand our everyday world and our cultural knowledge. Therefore, the major themes of the SIG include: Imbedding Aboriginal Perspectives, Knowledges and Pedagogies, incorporating the 8 ways of Aboriginal learning, pedagogy and its connection to storytelling, decolonising pedagogy and giving back.

This launch / workshop will introduce the SIG to enabling educations across Australia, and will commence with a yarning circle to gauge the knowledge of the group in the area of the SIG and to discuss ways in which the SIG might work, how we will meet and the input that members of the SIG can bring to the Indigenous Enabling space.

Academic integrity and an educative approach in enabling education.

Michelle Picard, Sharon Cooper (University of Newcastle); Anthea Fudge, Snjezana Bilic (University of South Australia)

Academic integrity is an important part of the academic culture and literacies embedded in university study. This workshop aims to explore how effective enabling learning and teaching related to academic integrity can be ensured. Participants will explore the intersection of the literature on an educative approach towards academic integrity and that on enabling pedagogies and unpack exemplars showcasing an educative approach towards academic integrity in enabling education.

Background/context of the workshop

To support the complex needs of enabling students, scholars have argued that a specific 'enabling pedagogies' are required (e.g. Hellmundt & Baker, 2017; Hodges et al., 2013; Hrasky & Kronenberg, 2011; Lane & Sharp, 2014) particularly because of the large number of first-in-family students who do not have knowledge of university cultures (Pitman et al., 2016). Enabling pedagogies include encouraging a sense of belonging, explicit explanation, peer-mentoring, counselling and additional academic support embedded into the programs (Hodges et al., 2013; Lane & Sharp, 2014).

The supportive and flexible approaches, respectful guidance, modelling and encouragement characteristic of enabling programs and pedagogies (Hellmundt & Baker, 2017; Lane & Sharp, 2014) seem at odds with current approaches to academic integrity in higher education. These appear to be “based on procedures, policies, appeals” and “punitive or disciplinary” sanctions that bring about behavioural changes “based on fear of punishment” (Dalal, 2015, p.1). Such approaches exacerbate the feelings of “fear, shame and anxiety” felt among many students in the enabling cohort that “create feelings of lack of capability and not belonging” and negatively affect their academic confidence (Burke et al., 2016, p.8).

Some universities take a more ‘educative’ approach towards developing academic integrity (Bretag et al, 2013; Bretag & Mahmud, 2016). However, the enabling cohort requires even more support including “guidance”, “encouragement”, “modelling” and “structure” (Hellmundt & Baker, 2017, p.23) than undergraduate students to understand the various disciplinary and task-specific requirements of academic integrity. This workshop explores how this support can be provided to facilitate “inner change that leads to original work by a student and other changes in outward behaviour” (Dalal, 2015, p.2) without negatively affecting the academic confidence of enabling students.

Summary of activities

- 1) Using a worksheet of key words on an educative approach towards academic integrity and enabling pedagogies, participants map the intersections between the two areas of research (10 minutes).
- 2) Using Bretag et al’s (2011) model for exemplary academic integrity practice in higher education, participants brainstorm issues with processes and pedagogy around academic integrity around “access”, “approach”, “responsibility”, “support” and appropriate amount of “detail” within their contexts (15 minutes).
- 3) We will report on resources and educative approaches developed at the two universities specifically for enabling students and these will be examined based on Bretag et al’s (2011) model by the participants (30 minutes).
- 4) We will summarise key themes arising from the discussion and respond to questions and comments from the floor (5 minutes).

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Lighting the path(way): Articulating curriculum design principles in open access enabling programs.

Bronwyn Relf (University of Newcastle), John O'Rourke (Edith Cowan University), Nicole Crawford (University of Tasmania), Sue Sharp (Edith Cowan University), Barry Hodges (University of Newcastle) & Robin Barnes (University of Tasmania).

In this workshop, the findings of this project will be presented, addressing a critical gap in enabling curriculum design knowledge. It will provide participants with the opportunity to engage in a national discussion about enabling program curriculum design with national and international colleagues and other enabling providers. Participants will be given the opportunity to contribute their views on enabling curriculum design principles and to assess if these principles are relevant to their current program and practices.

Australia has a large number of university and non-university providers of enabling (bridging) programs. Increasing student enrolments over the last few years have led to increased government scrutiny of these programs (Lomax-Smith et al, 2011; Kemp & Norton, 2014) without an accompanying examination of how program curriculum structure contributes to the effectiveness in preparing students, particularly mature aged students, for higher education. Whilst a small number of studies have examined enabling program curriculum design at separate institutions, there are no such national comparative studies (Lane & Sharp 2014; Relf & Burgess 2014; Sharp, O'Rourke, Lane & Hay, 2014).

This project, funded by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT), focuses on articulating the curriculum design principles in three open access programs that represent the diversity of programs offered nationally. The approach to curriculum design was examined in enabling programs offered at the University of Newcastle (UON), Edith Cowan University (ECU) and the University of Tasmania (UTAS). Each of these three institutions have a long history of successful delivery of enabling programs and represent the diversity of enabling programs offered in Australia. Some programs are explicitly designed to prepare students for certain undergraduate disciplines (disciplines focus), others are designed to facilitate transition into a range of disciplines (academic skills focus) while others have a mix of academic skills and discipline focus.

Participants will be given a copy of the curriculum design principles from the project and a copy of the “Lighting the Pathway” final report. Using a world café methodology, participants will define what is an enabling curriculum, assess the relevance of the presented principles to their own enabling program and share and compare these views with participants from other institutions.

Discussions from this workshop will allow participants to facilitate the curriculum design in new and existing programs, inform the evaluation of program quality and the development of best practice in enabling program delivery at their institutions.

With consent of the participants, a summary of the workshop discussions will be distributed to all participants as a resource for further use. Participants will also be invited to join the NAAEA “Enabling Curriculum” special interest group to continue discussions about enabling curriculum design after the conference.

