

# News for Enabling Educators

## NAEEA CHAIRPERSON’S MESSAGE

Dear Enabling Colleagues,

What a very different world we find ourselves working and living in at present. As we commenced the 2020 academic year, no one would have foreseen the completely unplanned and unimaginable context that the COVID-19 pandemic delivers us today. I hope you and your loved ones are staying safe and well amidst such a severe disruption to your lives.

As is the diversity in the nature of our Enabling offerings across institutions, so too is the experience and impact of this disruption on staff and students in variable contexts. The challenge for those educators whose institutions are relatively new to online delivery is much greater than for those who have been operating in this space for many years. For those students who began 2020 studying online, the impact on their study regime is minimal; however, for those students whose choice it was to study face-to-face on a campus, that choice has been taken away and they are experiencing a study mode that is alien to them. This ‘new world’ required them to adjust to the new study environment in a short period of time. Interestingly, some transitioning students have relayed their satisfaction with the change to online and are reportedly more engaged in the online Zoom chats than in the face-to-face classroom. This is one positive in what for many students is an extremely difficult context and a massive upheaval to their worlds.

Collectively, no matter the study mode, our students are all impacted in aspects of their lives, many financially and emotionally. Additionally, many of our staff find themselves faced with delivery alien to the norm and charged with providing a higher level of emotional support to students in distress. Enabling educators are well equipped to manage challenging situations that present, having been exposed to the varied issues that confront our students in their ‘normal’ environment. Still, there are numerous surprises that we could not have anticipated with COVID-19 which are asking us to reassess our expectations of self and our students. We must not forget the importance of showing understanding and flexibility as students attempt to navigate barriers they would not have encountered pre-COVID-19. We must also be mindful of self-care as educators at this time of adversity when our focus is on getting as many of our students to the finishing line.

As students settle in to the ‘new normal’, it will be their lecturers, tutors and administrators who will provide the connection to their former world of study. We can’t underestimate the impact of really small actions we may take to provide that connectedness and sense of belonging/community. The quality enabling curriculum characteristic of our diverse programs will be enhanced by newfound strategies we adopt as an answer to the disrupted environment in which we find ourselves. (continued on page 2)



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- Discover Enabling Equity Conference highlights
- Read about the innovative practices of member institutions as they manage the impacts of COVID-19
- Celebrate the success of Enabling Education academics at UniSA



## CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

More than ever before, I encourage collaboration across our national footprint as we all strive to better understand ways to support our student and staff wellbeing and success. Please reach out to fellow colleagues to address challenges and also share your successes in addressing this new reality. The NAEAA Executive will be pleased to share your ideas across its membership. We are in this together and our most pressing desire is to support those Enabling students who have entrusted us to assist them facilitate a changed life through education.

Although the COVID-19 has been the focal point of late and has consumed much of our time and energy, as a NAEAA Executive, we have not lost sight of the need to promote our association and raise the profile of Enabling education within the

sector. I am privileged to have been recently re-elected to continue in the role as Chairperson of NAEAA for the next two years. The association sees the same executive group working collaboratively in the interests of all Enabling educators and students.

On behalf of the Executive team, I wish you a return to the post-COVID-19, a world I would suggest may be quite different in many ways to what we have known.

Yours in connection and collaboration as we endeavour to proactively support the wellbeing of our students and colleagues.

Many regards

Karen Seary  
NAEAA Chairperson.  
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*“We can’t underestimate the impact of really small actions we may take to provide connectedness and a sense of belonging and community.”*

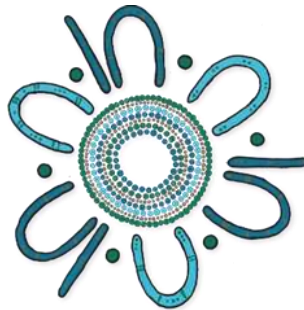
### NAEAA MEMBERSHIP 2020

Membership of NAEAA is now due. However, the Association recognises this year has presented great challenges for many of its members. If you are able to pay your membership, please contact:

[admin@enablingeducators.org](mailto:admin@enablingeducators.org)

For more information about the NAEAA, please visit the website at <https://enablingeducators.org/>

## EPHEA—NAEAA 2019 CONFERENCE



In 2019 the biennial NAEAA conference was combined with the EPHEA conference and was hosted at the University of Wollongong and UOW College in Wollongong from 24<sup>th</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The overall theme of the conference was “Enabling Excellence through Equity”. This theme reflected the combined aims of the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia (NAEAA) and the Equity Practitioners in Higher Education in Australasia (EPHEA). The theme of the conference also emphasised the important role of both the equity practitioners and enabling educators

in supporting students from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Although this approach of combining two conferences was novel for both NAEAA and EPHEA, judging by the feedback from the attendees, as well as the opportunity to attract a wide range of keynote speakers, presenters and workshop facilitators, it was a success. The conference registration was sold out and reached its venue capacity at just over 380 attendees from Australia, New Zealand, United Kingdom, United States of America and Malaysia.

Keynote speakers included Professor Sally Kift, ALTC Teaching Fellow (The Best Chance for All: Enabling Pathways and Pedagogy for Student Success), Professor Liz Thomas, Edgehill University, UK (Excellent Outcomes for All Students), Ms Sonja Braidner, Winston Churchill Fellow (Preventing an Illusion of Inclusion: Practice Strategies for Success), Professor Peter Crampton, University of Otago NZ (Reclaiming Merit), Ms Carol Heijo, Disability Trust (“Three Strikes, and I’m still not out”), Dr Leanne Holt, Macquarie

(continued)



*Associate Professor Seamus Fagan, Professor Emeritus Janet Taylor and Mr David Bull receive NAEAA lifetime member awards .*

University (Empowering Flight - Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander knowledges, values and aspirations), and Professor Sue Webb, Monash University (Rethinking Equity in High Participation Tertiary Systems).

There were also 5 workshops and these were facilitated by Professor Sarah O'Shea (International Perspectives and Approaches to Supporting and Retaining First in Family Students), Professor Dawn Bennett (Equity and Employability in Higher Education), Dr Sharlene Leroy-Dyer (Embedding Indigenous Approaches and Pedagogies into Enabling Teaching Practice), Ms Cathie Walsh (Unconscious Bias – Activities to use with Staff in Support of De-biasing) and Dr Tamsin Hinton-Smith (Taking a personalised and academic life cycle approach to understanding and responding to Equality Diversity and Inclusion issues in higher education).

On top of the amazing keynotes and workshops, the conference also included 126 presentations and 13 poster presentations. Authors of selected submissions were also invited to submit their papers for a special issue of the Student Success Journal which was published on 9/3/20 (Vol. 11 (1)).

One of the highlights for NAEAA was the recognition and awarding of three inaugural lifetime member awards to Associate Professor Seamus Fagan, Mr David Bull and Professor Emeritus Janet Taylor. Seamus, David and Janet have played a significant role in the enabling education in Australia and it was appropriate to recognise them for their contribution during the conference gala dinner.

Lots of work goes in to organising a conference and the conference chairs would like to thank all the committee members, peer reviewers, Student Success Journal editors, as well as the NAEAA and EPHEA executive committees for their support and contribution. The conference organising committee would also like to thank the EPHEA and UOW College for providing the seed funding, and UOW and UOW College for providing the venue and logistical support for the conference.

Dr Pranit Anand  
Queensland University of Technology  
NAEAA 2019 conference chair

## CHANGES TO ENABLING LOAD FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS

A [recent Australian Government change](#) to the way Enabling courses are funded will mean fewer students will be able to learn and upgrade their skills through subsidised enabling programs.

Under the enabling allocation funding scheme, a fixed amount of enabling load is distributed to participating universities. This allows these universities to offer free preparatory study, removing the financial barrier to equitable access to higher education.

Prior to the change announced in November 2019, universities with allocated enabling funding have been able to continue to cater to growing demand, topping up enabling places by drawing on underutilised Commonwealth Supported Place sub-bachelor allocations. From 2020 funding for enabling places will only be provided up to the existing enabling allocation, inadequate for meeting current and future demand.

The impact of COVID-19 will mean more people will find themselves vulnerable to changes in the economy. The need for demand driven enabling funding is now more critical than ever.

Charmaine Davis (USQ) and Dr Sarah Hattam (UniSA).

## I STARTED TO BELIEVE...

The impact of Enabling Education programs on the lives of our students can never be underestimated. Jordan Ivey, a former Southern Cross University student tells his story.



“I remember how hard the words hit me – ‘you’re not smart enough’. I lost all motivation and started cutting classes. I almost didn’t finish high school. I hit rock bottom after school, with no university acceptance, no career trajectory and no plan.

I’d heard about the Preparing for Success Program. I was accepted and worked hard. For the first time in my life I received good grades and it felt so good.

I started to believe that I was not only capable of university, but with hard work, I may actually excel at this. I received a scholarship, which enabled me to dedicate to my studies full time.

With global problems surrounding marine life, I want to enable real change in the world and research is the best way I can make an impact. I am now living in Fiji conducting practical coral research while I finish my honours degree. Then I plan to complete my PhD.”

## FOUR PRINCIPLES FOR EFFECTIVE ONLINE COURSE DESIGN

When quickly switching to online modes of delivery, principles of simplicity and effectiveness may assist in course design. Simple, clear formatting that guides students through a limited number of thoughtfully selected and sequenced learning experiences can be very effective. This article draws on design experience using Community of Inquiry (Garrison, Anderson & Archer, 2010) and reflective cycles, to present 4 key principles that explore a concept of simple effectiveness in online course design.

### **Principle 1. Structure the online environment to support course learning outcomes (CLOs):**

Backward design principles (Wiggins & McTighe, 1998) allow selection of effective learning experiences that build towards assessment, evidencing achievement in CLOs. Then, online courses with simple formats, logical sequencing and ample lecturer guidance allow students to navigate and benefit from these learning experiences.

### **Principle 2. Consider student learning needs in inclusive course design:**

Effective online course design considers accessibility, data requirements and devise compatibility when selecting suitable apps, videos and virtual learning opportunities that are embedded in well-constructed, meaningful learning experiences. Effective online courses also consider student time commitments, providing both synchronous and asynchronous opportunities for purposeful, collaborative exploration of the course materials via wikis, forums and video conferences.

### **Principle 3. Focus on quality, active**

**learning experiences:** Effective courses articulate what students *do*, and using a lens, like the Bloom’s taxonomy verbs, helps select learning experiences with a range of cognitive levels. Contextualising learning in authentic and complex scenarios or problems can encourage student interaction and engagement, and frequent well-designed formative assessment, through online quizzes, supports student self-regulation and reflection.

*When quickly switching to online modes of delivery, principles of simplicity and effectiveness may assist in course design.*

### **Principle 4. Seek feedback to improve.**

Effective online course design takes time. Routinely embedding simple mechanisms, such as online surveys, to capture formal and informal student feedback on course design, engagement and assessment allows for consistent course improvement.

Useful resource repositories include; Online learning good practice (TEQSA): <https://www.teqsa.gov.au/online-learning-good-practice>; USQ Learning and Teaching: <https://www.usq.edu.au/learning-teaching>

Russell Crank  
Educational Designer  
University of Southern Queensland





*UniSA College Program Directors Tanya Weiler, Sarah Hattam and Tristan King receive an Australian Awards for University Teaching Citation*

## UNISA ENABLING EDUCATION ACADEMICS RECOGNISED ON A NATIONAL LEVEL

Signifying recognition of the work of equity educators on the national stage, UniSA College Program Directors Sarah Hattam, Tanya Weiler and Tristan King were recent recipients of an Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT) citation for their work in building a community of enabling practice within the teaching team in enabling programs at UniSA. The Program Directors adopt Burke, Crozier and Misiaszek's (2017) proposition that there is a need to build 'critical communities of practice embedded in a framework of praxis whereby teachers can develop inclusive pedagogies'. This was formed out of witnessing how being unaware of best practice models of teaching can disempower otherwise excellent educators unfamiliar with enabling pedagogies.

With the UniSA team moving quickly to adapt to the on-line environment with Covid-19, the Program Director team is intent on ensuring the community of practice is sustained and supported in this unprecedented teaching period for both continuing and sessional staff. Invitations to connect through regular zoom meetings and sharing on-line teaching tips via our collective resource site alongside professional development in on-line technology platforms are keeping lines of communication open and fostering opportunities for digital innovators within the teaching team to shine. Once we have recalibrated and this new teaching style becomes more familiar, our collective action research projects will inquire into enacting enabling pedagogies in the on-line environment.

The following initiatives have been developed by the Program Director team and recognized in their AAUT award:

### *UniSA College Building and Sustaining Communities of Practice in Enabling Pedagogies Framework:*

**Tutor induction:** Structured induction and training for Tutors new to the enabling space designed specifically to reflect on and contrast their undergraduate approach to the ethos of the College.

**Teaching squares:** An opportunity to de-privatise the teaching space through formative peer review and discussion of teaching approaches stimulating reflection over evaluation.

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## MENTAL HEALTH INSIGHTS

Things are changing super-fast everywhere and it makes it impossible to keep up. For all of you out there in COVID-19 land this is the same truth. We are being asked to do all the things that we would normally do (ie shopping; caring for kids or parents or partners; Uni study; paid work) in a new and confusing way. And at the same time, we are expected to start a whole bunch of new things that we are told are very important (ie figure out how to socially isolate; stay up to date with learning online; wash your hands constantly).

Sorry, but what day is it again? I am trying to get motivated just to get out of bed and start the day! It is normal to feel a sense of discomfort with all the new stuff not to mention grieve over the loss of old ways or things we wanted to happen, but we can't do now. But what can be unhelpful is getting caught up by these feelings and allowing them to stop us living the life we are able to live that best aligns with the person we want to be and the values we hold.

Even though there may be truth behind feelings and thoughts such as;

- "I have more important things to worry about now like (insert kids, parents)"
- "I like to learn face to face and I miss seeing people"
- "Studying online is too boring and I get distracted"
- "I feel frustrated and don't know where to start!"

While not feeling in the mood to [study](#) or work makes complete sense, it is not helpful to get caught up in this anxiety. Instead, turn your attention to things you can control. Use problem solving to keep your attention on important things in your control and take small steps to keep living out your values and goals. Small steps can help with staying motivated. (Continued on page 7)



## UNISA ACADEMICS RECOGNISED ON A NATIONAL LEVEL (CONTINUED)

### **Inclusive and Enabling Pedagogy**

**Workshops:** Aimed to develop awareness of pedagogical approaches specific to enabling education with a focus on countering deficit views, building relationships and encouraging best practice approaches.

### **Regional Tutor Professional Development:**

Regional tutors travelled each six weeks to participate in CPD with specific focusses on Cultural Awareness and Safety, student mental health and wellbeing, and embedding online resources.

**Action Research projects:** Ongoing cycles of Action Research have allowed educators to connect the teaching, curricu-

lum, course design, assessment and feedback to enabling pedagogical approaches.

**College Reading Group:** A monthly group dedicated to discussing and reflecting on scholarly articles on enabling and critical pedagogies.

### **Teaching and Learning Resources**

**site:** An online tailored repository of resources, readings and specific information around enabling and critical pedagogies for all academic staff.

Dr Sarah Hattam and Tanya Weiler  
Education Futures  
UniSA

## RAPID TRANSITION TO ONLINE “STUDY FROM HOME” AT UON’S PALS CENTRE

Rapidly transitioning to online modes of teaching and support is a challenge that’s been embraced by staff in the Pathways and Academic Learning Support Centre (PALS) at the University of Newcastle. Our first discussions about the move to a ‘Study From Home’ approach happened on 12 March and by 23 March all of our previously on-campus courses across two campuses and three programs (Newstep, Open Foundation and Yapug) were successfully and wholly online.

### **Communication and proactive engagement**

As staff, we’re lucky because we have each other to lean on (which we now do via Microsoft Teams and Zoom) and with an already fully online Open Foundation program in operation, we’ve got a lot of existing expertise in our team. However, we are acutely aware that this may not be the case for many of our students. All of our staff across teaching, academic and professional classifications have pulled out all stops to provide:

- Consistent, Centre-wide messaging to students about the transition to ‘Study From Home’ online learning via personalised emails and Facebook.
- Course- and Program-specific information to students: each course has its quirks and we have not taken a one-size-fits-all approach to our ‘Study From Home’ teaching practices.

- Regular, proactive and responsive in-course engagement with students via email, phone and discussion boards.
- Personalised support and engagement through our embedded support team (counsellor, English language support, learning support, librarian).

### **A staged approach: providing a mix of synchronous and asynchronous learning opportunities**

Equitable opportunities for learning are at the forefront of our approach to teaching, and for students who didn’t choose online study, the equity implications are complex. Students are no longer be able to attend synchronous lectures as previously timetabled; they may experience anxiety, job losses and issues accessing the internet and appropriate hardware. To mitigate these problems, our ‘Study From Home’ offerings took a staged approach:

**Stage 1:** This one-week, interim, stage, was based largely on synchronous learning opportunities and was implemented in the week beginning 16 March before stricter social gathering limits came into place. Some students were still attending on-campus lectures and these were live-streamed via Collaborate or Zoom for those choosing to stay home. (continued)

### FABENZ CONFERENCE 2020

The NAEEA is closely affiliated with the Foundation and Bridging Educators New Zealand (FABENZ), which works to promote foundation and bridging education throughout New Zealand.

The FABENZ 2020 Conference is planned for 2 to 4 December, at the University of Auckland. This will provide a very welcome platform to showcase the important work of educators in meeting the challenges of 2020, and in advocating for equity in education for our students.

More information about FABENZ is available on the organisation’s website at <http://fabenz.org.nz/>.

All tutorials were offered via Collaborate only. This allowed staff and students to become familiar with the technology, while still having the opportunity for traditional face-to-face activities if desired. Further, we used this time to consider how courses could be re-designed as ‘Study From Home’ offerings.

**Stage 2:** Beginning on 23 March, this longer transitional stage allowed for more purposeful staff development in online T&L. Staff were encouraged to design for less reliance on synchronous activities. With face-to-face classes stopped, the focus is on: ‘chunked’ videos for lecture material; integrated discussion board activities; and downloadable worksheets. Synchronous activities are still offered, however, they are being used in more purposeful ways to foster social connections, facilitate immediate problem-solving, and for practical lessons, rather than for passive lectures.

**Stage 3:** When students returned after an extended Easter break on 4 May, the transitions made during Stage 2 were fully realised. Throughout the health crisis, staff have been encouraged to exercise discretion regarding assessment deadlines, and some Course Coordinators changed assessment schedules. Further, UoN granted a blanket 14-day extension to all students for one assessment item per course. This provision is being managed by staff so that scaffolded assessments do not lose their efficacy as teaching and learning opportunities.

### **Embrace available technology — things will go wrong, but you can’t break it**

While there have been bumps along the road, the team has pulled together, drawing on each others’ existing knowledge of online T&L:

- We have embraced Zoom and Collaborate and video-recording software for our teaching.
- In-class tests have transitioned to online quizzes.
- Our mathematics staff have created innovative ways of assessing students — especially given that the accessible software doesn’t easily allow for students to write mathematical symbols.
- Visual arts and design staff are running interactive sessions on Collaborate and/or Zoom and using secure cloud-based file-sharing platforms to share their work.
- Our support staff are providing appointments and drop-in sessions via Collaborate and Zoom.
- Innovative alternatives to group work and group assignments have been designed with students able to work in groups in Collaborate and produce and submit a range of electronic presentations.

### **Re-purpose, curate and re-use**

Our approach has been to keep the student experience in the foreground, while also looking after the wellbeing of our staff. Staff have been encouraged to:

- Re-purpose existing materials, for example, use current concept-check lecture questions as the basis for discussion board activities.
- Examine the previous year’s lecture recordings and if suitable, edit into chunks and upload.
- Curate existing web-based, open source learning materials.

The feedback we’ve had from students is positive and appreciative of our open and frequent communication in a context where messages are changing from day-to-day. Our students are understandably anxious — some have chosen to withdraw — but most have stayed with their programs and have taken to the challenge of ‘Study From Home’ with a willingness to make it work. In this brave new world, their enabling study may be the only constant in their lives.

By Evonne Irwin, Program Convenor, Open Foundation Online; Kristen Allen, Program Convenor, Ourimbah Campus; Paul Chojenta, Program Convenor, Newstep; Michelle Mansfield, Program Convenor, Open Foundation; Hannah Pipe, Indigenous Enabling Learning Advisor.

## **MORE MENTAL HEALTH**

What if the ways you have managed stress in the past is now not an option? Rather than stopping the things that give you balance and maintain your wellbeing, or starting something new, try to modify the things that have worked in the past. Let’s use the [5 Ways to Wellbeing](#) to give this a go!

**Connect:** Reach out to others, at least once daily for thirty minutes. Try to do Skype, phone calls, texting—connect with people to seek and provide support. Don’t forget to do this for your children as well. Your kids miss their friends, too!

**Be active:** Find some time to move each day, for at least thirty minutes. Go outside, or use YouTube videos that offer free movement classes, yoga or stretching and if all else fails, turn on the music and have a dance party!

**Keep learning:** This is an easy one to do! As either an academic or a student, you are doing it already, and now you are learning to be online!

**Be aware:** Give everyone the benefit of the doubt, and a wide berth. A lot of cooped up time can bring out the worst in everyone. Move with grace through disagreements, don’t get into every argument, and forgive and rather than holding on to anger and disappointment.

**Help others:** Find ways to give back to others. Offer to grocery shop, check in with elderly neighbours—helping others gives us a sense of agency when things seem out of control.

Remember stress is a normal experience for everyone but everyone responds differently. Our whole society is being asked to respond to some serious stress in a mass effort. It is OK to feel that this is hard. It is. There is no “right” way to manage life and we are all doing our best. Helen Scobie, Enabling Counsellor, University of Newcastle.

## ABOUT NAEAA

The National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia represents enabling educators and practitioners from across the country for the purpose of collaborating on issues of common interest and relevance to enable education and the students whose lives are changed through access to tertiary education.

For more information about the Association, contact [admin@enablingeducators.org](mailto:admin@enablingeducators.org) or visit our website at <https://enablingeducators.org/>



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## THE SOCIAL PAGES: INSIDE THE CONFERENCE

The 2019 EPHEA-NAEEA Conference involved much hard work, many presentations, and some serious networking. There was also fun to be had, particularly at the Conference dinner, held at the beautiful Lagoon Restaurant, in North Wollongong.

