

# News for Enabling Educators

## NAEEA CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE

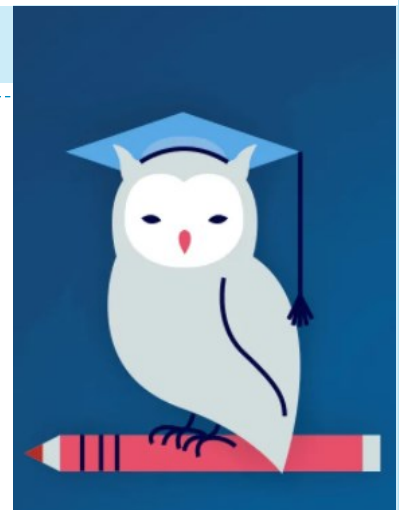
Dear Enabling Colleagues,

I write my welcome for Edition 18 of our newsletter on the back of a highly successful NAEEA conference, held at Charles Darwin University's new Danala campus on the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> of December where 114 NAEEA members and 'friends of Enabling' assembled to network over the two days. Having a welcome message from the Honourable Jason Clare, Minister for Education, was a highlight, the words he shared confirming he views Enabling education as the way of the future in growing the tertiary sector in a responsible manner. Emeritus Professor Mary O'Kane's keynote also pointed to a future where Enabling will be central to the achievement of the Accord recommendations. Professor Sarah O'Shea delivered what we have come to expect of her as a keynote, delivering a pertinent and meaningful message for all educators working in the equity space. The input from the Minister and our two keynotes, alongside the networking with like-minded colleagues at the conference has me confident of a brighter future for Enabling education in Australia.

I offer a heartfelt thank you once again to those colleagues serving on the NAEEA Executive Committee for the collegiality and shared vision that continued to drive our advocacy and hard work throughout 2024. Thank you also to those NAEEA members who, through continued membership contributed to an association which is growing stronger each year. It was evident at conference that the expansion in number and membership of the 12 Special Interest Groups (SIGs) has been influential in strengthening our collaborative effort across the sector and will drive more cross-institutional research to support the efficacy of our programs into the future. I encourage you to join one of these SIGs if you haven't already, to gain value in networking with colleagues who have shared interests.

As we close off the 2024 academic year, it is time to reflect on yet another challenging twelve months which sadly sees some of the positions our valued colleagues across the sector hold being made redundant. The emotional toll this takes on them, their families and their colleagues is significant and we offer our thoughts and support as they look to future prospects.

In closing, I wish you all the very best with your Enabling endeavours in 2025. As NAEEA continues to expand its reach and influence, we remain committed to advocating for an inclusive higher education system that embraces diversity and provides opportunity for all who seek to improve their lives through further



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### SPECIAL POINTS OF INTEREST

- 2024 Conference wrap up
- Teaching Excellence Awards
- Enabling Sector Quality Framework—Draft Capabilities (Call for feedback)

## NAEEA CHAIRPERSON'S MESSAGE (CONTINUED)

education. The journey next year will no doubt present challenges; however I am confident our collective spirit and determination will see us rise to those challenges.

On behalf of the Executive team, I wish you and your loved ones a safe and enjoyable festive season. I do hope you all manage some relaxation after a challenging but fulfilling year. I also encourage you to start

planning to join up once again in Perth for our 8<sup>th</sup> NAEEA Conference in 2026. That seems such a distance away but if this year is anything to go by, we'll be enjoying each other's company sooner than we expect.

Many regards  
Karen Seary  
NAEEA Chairperson

## NAEEA 7TH INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON ENABLING EDUCATION (ICEE)

The 2024 NAEEA Conference was recently held at Charles Darwin University's new state-of-the-art city campus, Danala. Danala is the Larrakia First Nations name for dillybag, representing a place to house knowledge.

There were 115 delegates from across Australia and New Zealand, with over 90 presentations, posters and workshops. Keynotes included Distinguished Professor Sarah O'Shea and Emeritus Professor Mary O'Kane, as well as mini keynotes from Dr Joseph Crawford and our very own Karen Seary, Chair of NAEEA. Highlights included the welcome video from the Minister of Education, Hon. Jason Clare MP and the panel discussion with former Enabling students Jubilee Weo and Aaliyah Rawnsley, Professor Sarah O'Shea, Karen Seary and the Pro Vice-Chancellor of the Faculty of Arts and Society at CDU, Professor Ruth Wallace.

Congratulations to our two NAEEA Teaching Excellence Award recipients, Liam Frost-Camilleri and Erin O'Donoghue, who were presented with their awards at the conference.

The conference has been described as a warm and friendly space to make new connections and share our learning and teaching practices and research. On behalf of the Conference Organising Committee, I thank dele-



*Above: And that's a wrap! End of day 1 of the NAEEA Conference*

gates for being brave and travelling north at the peak of our wet season. You risked being eaten by a crocodile, stung by a box jellyfish, swooped by a plover and melting in the heat.

Danala was designed to bring students, visitors, academics and other community members together to learn and grow in a place that strongly recognises First Nations people, culture, language and customs. At Danala, students and staff will weave a strong spiritual Danala, a dillybag where they will carry knowledge and tools as they travel along a successful and fulfilling career.

Thank you to all the delegates, keynotes, and guest speakers, including past Enabling students, for sharing your knowledge and experience and helping us weave a stronger Enabling dillybag for years to come. I hope that you make your way back to Darwin again soon.

By [George Lambrinidis](#), Charles Darwin University  
Chair of 2024 NAEEA Conference Organising Committee

## NAEEA CONFERENCE (CONTINUED)

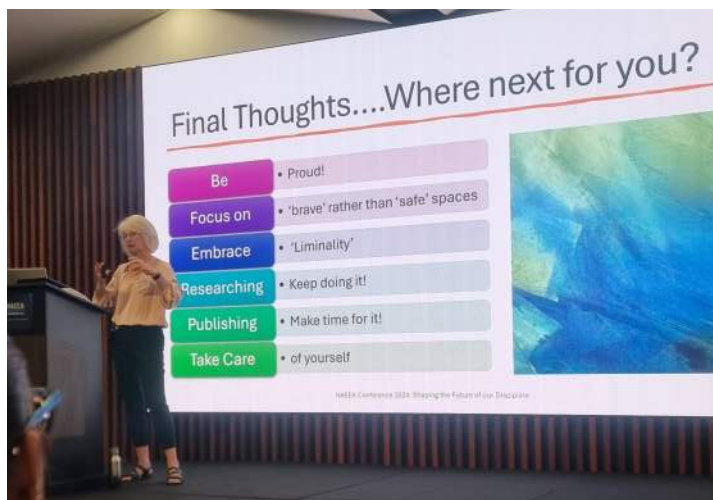
Don't forget to tag NAEEA when you post about your conference experiences on LinkedIn and Twitter!

<https://www.linkedin.com/company/enablededucators/>  
<https://x.com/o1naeea>

We would love to see more photos of the conference. If you would like to share your photos, please email them to the conference Chair, George Lambrinidis:

[George.Lambrinidis@cdu.edu.au](mailto:George.Lambrinidis@cdu.edu.au)

We would like to remind delegates to complete the conference evaluation survey sent from [naeeaconference2024@agentur.com.au](mailto:naeeaconference2024@agentur.com.au). If you did not receive the email, please contact them directly to request a link.



*Above: Distinguished Professor Sarah O'Shea delivering the keynote speech on Day 2 of the conference.*



*Above: STEM SIG members gathered around their conference poster*



*Below and right: Conference delegates enjoying the Conference dinner*



## NAEEA TEACHING EXCELLENCE AWARDS

*Congratulations to our two NAEAA Teaching Excellence Awards recipients, Liam Frost-Camilleri and Erin O'Donoghue, who were presented with their awards at the conference.*

**LIAM** was awarded the NAEAA Teaching Excellence Award 2024 for outstanding teaching in the Federation University enabling program, which has been sustained over a period of time and evidenced through exceptional teaching satisfaction scores and qualitative comments from students. Liam's enactment of enabling and careful pedagogies in curriculum design and connection with the students has

Award 2024 for exceptional teaching in an enabling outreach program for First Nation's incarcerated women in Brisbane. Erin's commitment to providing an educational experience grounded in Indigenous pedagogies and Indigenous knowledges that focuses on culture has been recognised widely across education and political sectors for its potential to empower women who have been disengaged from education. Through Erin's 'Winanga-Li's Framework', Erin can re-engage women in education, providing a positive experience that is culturally responsive and building the learner's confidence and capabilities to see themselves furthering their education once their period of



*Above: Karen Seary presenting the 2024 NAEAA Teaching Excellence Awards to Liam Frost-Camilleri and Erin O'Donoghue, at the 2024 NAEAA Conference in Darwin*

produced excellent outcomes for his students. Liam demonstrates curriculum leadership in the enabling sector through the sole authorship of an introduction to academic literacies and a university culture textbook that was competitively selected for publication. The NAEAA Teaching Excellence Award panel commends Liam for his commitment to high-quality teaching in enabling education.

**ERIN** was awarded the NAEAA Teaching Excellence

award for exceptional teaching in an enabling outreach program for First Nation's incarcerated women in Brisbane. Erin's drive to make a difference in the lives of others through education is central to the enabling philosophy and why she is a worthy recipient of the NAEAA Teaching Excellence Award 2024.

Recipients each receive a \$500 prize, and we encourage NAEAA members to apply in 2025. Watch for the next opening round in the next newsletter or our website!

## STARS CONFERENCE 2025

Call for submissions now open!

<https://unistars.org/>



**STUDENT SUCCESS CONFERENCE**  
30 JUNE - 2 JULY 2025  
CAIRNS PULLMAN INTERNATIONAL

## NEWCASTLE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF ENABLING

This year the University of Newcastle's flagship pathway program, [Open Foundation](#) proudly celebrated 50 years of changing lives through access to higher education.

*From its small beginnings in 1974 with an intake of 80 students, Open Foundation—the first enabling program in the country—has changed the life course of tens of thousands of people.*

The University marked this significant anniversary through a series of projects and events engaging alumni and the wider community, including a major exhibition.

The [50 YEARS FIFTY STORIES Exhibition](#) featured 50 former pathways students through portraits and stories, capturing the transformative power of our enabling programs and showcasing the dreams, the struggles, the hard work, the setbacks, and the successes along the way.



*Above: 50 YEARS FIFTY STORIES Exhibition, University Gallery*

The exhibition was only made possible with the help of a wonderful team of current undergraduate students, including photographers, designers, and writers, some of whom are Open Foundation graduates themselves. The exhibition was also used as a backdrop for a range of high-profile occasions, including the Times Higher Education Campus Live ANZ conference reception.

Throughout the year, the University engaged with local media to highlight this special milestone, including a Newcastle Herald cover wrap in July and a 30-minute [documentary](#) celebrating the impact of Open Foundation produced by NBN which aired in June. Using interviews with 16 alumni, staff, and students and archival footage, the documentary showcased the history and impact of Open Foundation across its five decades. Our 50-



*Above: Members of the project team, from L-R Ayden Seis, Isabel Whittle, Dr Emma Hamilton, Dr Jo Hanley, Lochlan Vardy, Kristen Zahra, Yasmina El Mrabet, Lauren Crask, Billy Callaghan (absent Ben Collison, Dr Ryan O'Neill, Gillean Shaw)*

*The common thread in all of the stories and those of so many of our other pathways students is the importance of free access to higher education; having a safe and supported place to explore university study, to develop newfound directions or achieve long-hoped for goals that may have seemed out of reach, and to feel a sense of belonging.*



*Above: From L-R, Lauren Crask, A/Prof Anna Bennett (Director, Pathways and Academic Learning Support), Cathy Burgess, Charlotte Versteegen*

## NEWCASTLE CELEBRATES 50 YEARS OF ENABLING (CONTINUED)



study and build careers in every field. The University of Newcastle looks forward to continuing its work supporting the educational goals of individuals and the communities of the Hunter and Central Coast, where they, in turn, make important contributions to the social, cultural, and economic fortunes of our regions.

By [Dr Jo Hanley](#), Pathways & Academic Learning Support Centre, University of Newcastle

*Left: Members of the 50 featured students and project team*

*Below: Student speaker Angela Miezies*

year anniversary also featured in the University's reputation campaigns with the powerful pathway stories of [Seb](#) and [Millie](#). Open Foundation's achievement was even acknowledged in Parliament, Newcastle held up as an example of equity and excellence in enabling education by [Education Minister Jason Clare](#).

It has been a wonderful year of celebrations, but most importantly we acknowledge the success of all our pathway graduates, those students who took their tentative steps into higher education by enrolling in Open Foundation or one of our other pathway programs—so many of whom have gone on to complete undergraduate degrees, pursue postgraduate



## NAEEA SPECIAL INTEREST GROUPS UPDATE



This year, we have witnessed remarkable growth in the membership of the SIGs and the impressive outputs being achieved. I'd like to extend my heartfelt thanks to each of the facilitators who have risen to the challenge, creating fantastic cross-institutional opportunities. Each SIG was proudly showcased at our recent NAEEA conference, where they presented posters highlighting their outstanding achievements and contributions. We've seen new opportunities emerge for research, education, and professional development, laying a strong foundation for future advancements. As I reflect on this year's successes, I'm filled with excitement for what's to come in 2025. If you haven't joined a SIG yet, I strongly encourage you to visit our website, explore the options, and get involved in this dynamic and rewarding community. Enjoy your Christmas break.

By [Dr Trixie James](#), CQUniversity Australia

# CALLING ALL ENABLING EDUCATORS: RECRUITING UNIT DESIGNERS, UNIT COORDINATORS, LECTURERS AND TUTORS FOR INCLUSIVE PRACTICE BETA TESTING

The National Universities Accord Final Report (2024) highlights that students from underrepresented backgrounds continue to face lower success rates within Australian Universities. It acknowledges the importance of equity, inclusion and diversity however, it does not clearly identify tangible teaching and learning strategies that can be applied at unit, course and whole of university level to achieve parity (Ballard et al., 2020; Eaton, 2022).

Edith Cowan University's enabling program UniPrep provides university entry through a scaffolded curriculum. To develop tangible inclusive strategies, the UniPrep team created three inclusive practice audits to address inclusion at its core, specifically asking enabling educators to reflect on their curriculum, with a view to:

- increase visibility, voice, and perspectives of underrepresented cohorts, including, LGBTQIA+, and people with disability within units.
- increase representation Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples
- provide equitable access to learning through Universal Design for Learning principles.

The audits adopt a reflective cycle, asking educators to specifically assess their units against tangible, actionable

examples of inclusive practice and goal setting.

We are currently finalising feedback from the ECU's first round of institutional Beta testing and consultations, and will commence the second round of Beta testing in early 2025. If you would like to be part of testing, please follow the QR code or contact Michael Howie at [m.howie@ecu.edu.au](mailto:m.howie@ecu.edu.au).

This external testing will also inform a research project focussed on audit usability and perceptions towards inclusion and inclusive practice. We will also invite testers to be part of cross-institutional research project.

Once registered, we will be in contact in early 2025 and provide each of you with links to access the Audits, a run-down on how to use the audits and the opportunity for a meeting.

We look forward to hearing from you.

[Dr Angela Jones](#), Edith Cowan University



Above: Scan the QR code to participate

## Expanding the research outputs in the Enabling Sector

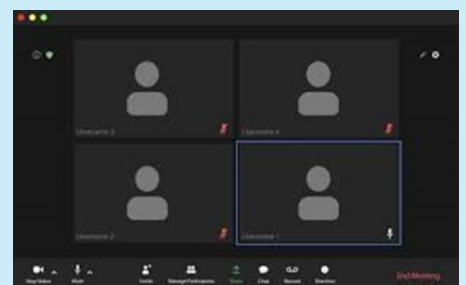


James, T., & Andrews, G. (2024). Levelling the playing field through GenAI: harnessing artificial intelligence to bridge educational gaps for equity and disadvantaged students. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 26(3). <https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.26.3.250>

O'Neill, R., James, T., Hof, S., Johnston, K & Datzor, M. (2024). Thriving, not just surviving: Using positive psychology to build psychological wellbeing in Pre-Tertiary students. *Journal of University Teaching & Learning Practice*. 21(6). <https://doi.org/10.53761/vzg13r44>



James, T., Braund, A., Larsen, A., Conradie, H., & Keating, L. (2024). Social innovation in action: Equity and empowerment through enabling education. *Widening Participation and Lifelong Learning*, 26(3). <https://doi.org/10.5456/WPLL.26.3.172>



Toth, G., Tomlins, M., James, T., Bond, K., & Kumar, B. (2024). Is there anybody out there? Educator perception of student social presence and engagement in the Zoomosphere. *Open Learning: The Journal of Open, Distance and e-learning*. 1-17. <https://doi.org/10.1080/02680513.2024.2322510>

## STAFF SPOTLIGHT: MICHELLE BRIEDE (FEDERATION UNIVERSITY AUSTRALIA)

### **Q: How long have you been working in Enabling? How did you come to work in enabling? What were you doing previously?**

I came to work in Enabling as a sessional in 2015, and by the end of my first semester was hooked! I applied and relocated across the state to commence a full-time Enabling role the following year. My previous teaching qualifications and work in education contexts (early childhood, primary, and Initial teacher education) has provided me with a sound knowledge base and supports me in this role.

### **Q2: What is your current role? Which units/course do you teach?**

I am currently the coordinator of our university's Enabling course FAST [Federation Access Studies]. I have taught in 3 of our units; Introduction to Tertiary Studies, Academic Writing, and Understanding University Learning.

### **Q3: What is most rewarding in your role? What is the most challenging?**

I find the work itself meaningful, and it is the most satisfying teaching role I have held. I love being a part of such a professional, passionate, competent, and student focussed team. The coordination role is currently the most rewarding as I enjoy working with staff to support them in our work. I most passionate when I am having conversations with other Enabling staff about professional practice.



*Above: Michelle Briede*

### **Q4: How is Enabling different to other roles that you hold or have held previously (education/teaching)?**

I was surprised how different the role is to other teaching roles. The first few years really challenged me to reconsider my teaching philosophy, and beliefs. It was humbling, and I feel I have learned a lot from my work in this space. It is demanding and requires a range of different skills. I struggle to reconcile the unfair circumstances and systemic barriers many students face. I also underestimated the emotional demands and the work (time, energy, knowledge, skills etc.) that are required of staff to adequately support students.

### **Q5: What do you think is commonly misunderstood (or a misconception) about Enabling education?**

I am often surprised by the lack of awareness and under-

standing of other non-enabling staff. I wouldn't think it is overreaching to describe this as a perception of Enabling as 'easy', 'simplified first year' or 'remedial' work. I believe students and staff are often underestimated and undervalued. The reality it takes a lot of effort, intentionality, skill, and understanding to teach enabling well. Students are often facing and managing/overcoming some very real demands and struggles and they often make significant progress in a short period. I have observed a distinct shift in other staff and changes to their approaches/mindsets when they enter and come to understand the complexity of teaching in Enabling.

### **Q6: What do you believe makes you a good Enabling educator? What is important to being able to do the job well?**

The ability to be empathic and to show care are extremely important. You also need to be pragmatic and free of judgment to respond 'in the moment' to student need. Also, the ability to consider the situation in the specific instance, but also much bigger picture simultaneously to identify what is in the best interests of the student. I think it is important to be willing to adapt, change, and improve, and to have dedication to the work to sustain yourself during challenging times.

### **Q7: Do you have any memorable moments during your time in Enabling?**

Seeing change, growth and success in others as they make a difference in their own lives is hugely fulfilling, and I am grateful to have had the opportunity to be a part of that. The significance of being able to be there for someone else, so they know that you are 'in their corner', and they feel seen, understood, and believed in. The moments that come to mind are the meaningful conversations, and situations when I know I have made a difference to someone's life.

### **Q8: What are your future professional goals (related to Enabling, or other)?**

I would love to continue to work and build a career in Enabling education. I am currently undertaking my PhD learning about the identities, and careers of enabling staff. I would love to be able to advocate for and contribute to the legitimatisation and professionalisation of our sector.

*Michelle Briede, Federation University Australia*



# CQU STEPS PROGRAM INTRODUCES YEAR 11 STUDENTS TO UNIVERSITY LEARNING

2024 saw an enabling initiative between CQU's STEPS program in Gladstone and local area Toolooa State High School (TSHS). The project, which began its planning phase in 2023, was ultimately finalised with two TSHS Guidance Counsellors, Silke Hetherington and Jenny Morris, whose daughter recently completed the Gladstone STEPs program.

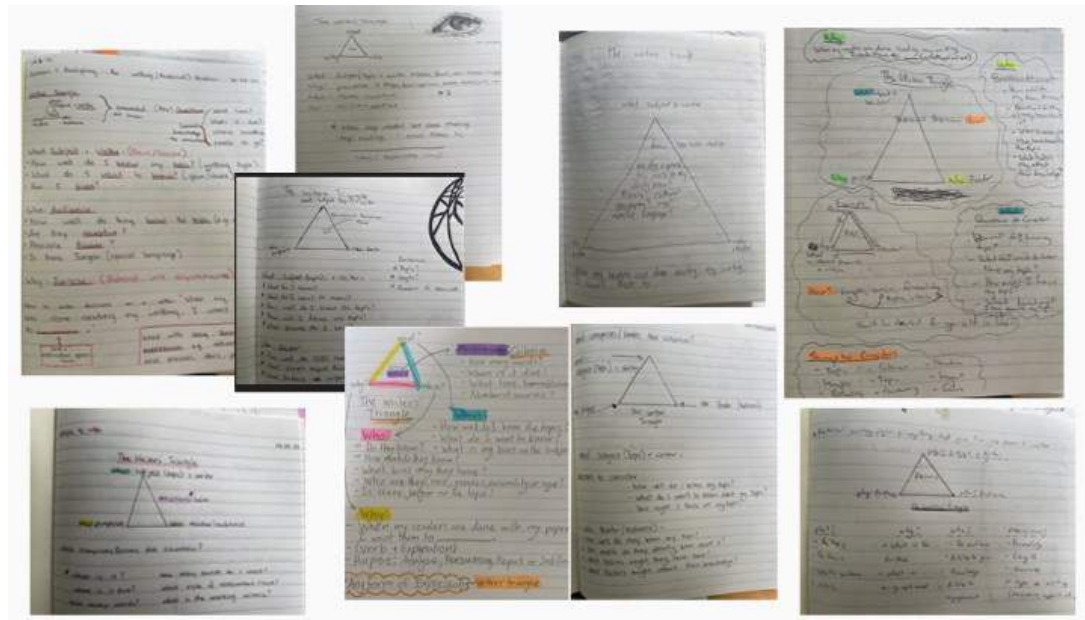
This new program aimed to introduce over sixty Year 11 students to university learning. All TSHS ATAR students in year 11 were included, and the high school provided two year 11 teachers, who were already familiar with the students, to attend the weekly classes and assist in the learning process.

*The Preparation Skills for University (PSU) unit from the CQUniversity Skills for Tertiary Education Preparatory Studies (STEPS) course, along with the corresponding micro-credentials, were used to create an engaging and informative 18-week program that equips students with the knowledge needed to enter university.*

Topics such as personality styles, learning types, reflective writing, research skills, and critical and creative thinking were covered. The high school provided students with a notebook for making learning journals, and students filled the notebooks as the weeks went on.

In addition, at the request of Toolooa State High School (TSHS), the program also included elements from the STEP's program's Essay Writing for University unit, covering referencing, essay writing for different disciplines, the writing process, and punctuation and sentence structure. The program ran over two high school terms, with Dr. Kimberly Williams, a STEPs associate lecturer, facilitating the sessions at TSHS each Wednesday morning.

While the students started off a bit shy, over the course of the eighteen weeks, they gained confidence and independence, with students participating in different forms of active learning: pair share, small group work, and independent individual learning, modelling the different types of activities that occur in tertiary tutorials. The final two weeks culminated in informal interactive orals with each student, a formative assessment that allowed both the students and the participating educators to glean how the entire experience went. Students noted that the greatest takeaways for them were in the areas of reflective writing, critical and creative thinking, and the critical evaluation of



*Above: compilation from students' learning journals about the writing process. This compilation was used later in the eighteen weeks to offer examples of the variety of learning styles and types of thinkers that were present in the classroom, as the different samples of work became the entryway for a discussion on analytical and creative thinking.*

internet and media sources.

*Beyond the high school students gaining confidence, new skills, and a greater sense of adult learning, the initiative also established a strong community connection.*

Whilst the endeavour's impetus was to equip high school students with the ability to transition smoothly to university directly after high school, it also makes students aware of the enabling programs that facilitate tertiary learning at any stage of life.

*By Kimberly K. Williams and Breanna Knight, School of Access Education, CQUniversity Australia*

## A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY

The Preparing for Success Program (PSP) at Southern Cross University (SCU) requires that all students complete four units of study, one of which is a core mathematics unit. While the act of learning can be transformative in any field, it's particularly evident in the realm of mathematics. This is the story so far of one of our students and her remarkable journey through the program and beyond.

I'm a mature age student studying at Southern Cross University. My education journey hasn't been a linear one, I left school at 14, midway through year 9, and home not long after that, before becoming a single mother at 18. I don't think there was ever a point where furthering my education wasn't something I wanted to do but doing it was it was another story. I did actually start a degree in my 20s, but I really struggled with the gaps in my education and adapting to the structured nature of education. I didn't do well, and I ended up dropping out. The experience knocked my confidence and left me feeling really frustrated with myself and question in whether I was cut out for university, but the desire to study never totally went away.

When my daughter finished school, I decided to enrol in SCU's PSP course. I chose to study at SCU because as a Lismore local, I liked that I had the option to be an on-campus student with access to the campus and associated learning facilities. Attending a smaller university, with smaller class sizes, also gave me more confidence going into PSP because I knew that there were some areas where I would really need one on one help.

When I enrolled in PSP I didn't have a specific degree in mind, I just knew wanted to study something that would allow me to draw on my own experiences of disadvantage to help others, and where I could avoid mathematics and other hard sciences as much as possible. The dream is still to find a career where I can make a positive impact, but PSP completely changed the direction I decided to go in. Like a lot of adults, especially those who have had an interrupted education, I had a lot of anxiety around mathematics, and I really didn't believe that it was something I could meaningfully improve at. I never would have enrolled in the PSP mathematics unit if it hadn't been a core. I entered

it with the mindset that I just had to get through it, pass, and then I could forget about it, but it ended up being my favourite subject. So much so that when I finished, I enrolled in a Bachelor of Science so I could take the first-year foundation mathematics unit as an elective, and then switched to the applied mathematics and physics major so I could keep doing the maths units.

Studying maths as part of PSP was a really positive experience that provided me with both the foundational understanding of maths that I had missed out on, and a newfound confidence in my ability to continue to learn maths. Having teachers who understood that students studying PSP are entering the course from a variety of backgrounds, and with different degrees of prior knowledge meant that they could meet us where we were at and build from there. What was simple revision for some students was completely new to me, and it is in situations like this where it can be really easy to internalise a lack familiarity with a subject and mistake it for a lack of intelligence or potential if it isn't taught in a way that makes the subject accessible to students who don't have that background knowledge.

The PSP was taught in a way where I didn't feel self-conscious about how unfamiliar I was with the material. There wasn't the assumption that students would just know something, the steps were broken down and explained, which not only helped students who needed it, but provided a good foundation for how to approach studying and working on problems at university. Working through problems that had been completely



*Above: Caroline Hale (former PSP student)*

## A TRANSFORMATIVE JOURNEY (CONTINUED)

new to me at the beginning of the course, and feeling the satisfaction that came with the process of solving them helped to change the relationship I had with maths. I stopped looking at it as something that you could either be good or bad at and started seeing it as something I enjoyed doing.

I would want other students to know that PSP is there to help you build a foundation and tools to aid you on your university journey, not as an obstacle you first need to get through. If there is a subject that intimidates you, there's a good chance it's a sign that you could really benefit from studying it, and getting all you can out of the experience. The teachers are there to help prepare you to succeed at university, and the best way they can do that is if you fully engage and let them know where you are at (as intimidating as this can be to do).

*I think mindset and self-belief can have a huge impact on your experience and success as a student, especially if you are facing additional challenges, or juggling multiple responsibilities like many non traditional students are.*

I don't mean this to say that you always need to be positive, or that you shouldn't acknowledge the impact your circumstances have on your education, but rather that it's important to acknowledge the ways your circumstances have impacted your education, so that you don't internalise them as reflective of your potential.

Approaching subjects with curiosity, rather than preconceived ideas about how difficult they will be, or your own abilities can be a helpful way to do this.

*If there's an assessment that you don't do well in, try not to see it as judgement on your capability, rather look at it as feedback showing you the areas you need more work on, because PSP is there to help you address these things before entering uni.*

I am now 2 years into my degree, and this year I enrolled in the shared Biomedical Science major as my second major, and while I would still like to do something meaningful with my degree, I am also really enjoying the learning journey at the moment. I am incredibly grateful to PSP and the teachers, for not only helping me prepare to succeed at university but helping me develop a more positive relationship with learning and education.

Caroline's story highlights the important concepts of growth mindset, curiosity and problem solving that are embedded in a spiral curriculum throughout PSP. The importance of mathematics in enabling programs is also evident, STEM subjects give student's the power of choice when shaping their future.

*By Caroline Hale, former PSP student and Dr Kerrie Stimpson, Associate Lecturer, Southern Cross University*

## SHARE YOUR UNIVERSITY'S ENABLING EDUCATION EVENTS, SUCCESSES AND INNOVATIONS

The NAEAA newsletter focuses on the achievements of students and staff in our sector, and on innovations that continue to foster the ongoing development of Enabling education. The newsletter is published twice a year. If you have a story you would like to include in the next edition, please contact [admin@Enablingeducators.org](mailto:admin@Enablingeducators.org). We would love to hear about your programs, projects, research, students and educators.

### NAEEA MEMBERSHIP 2025

Visit the website for details at <https://Enablingeducators.org/> or contact the NAEAA Executive at [admin@Enablingeducators.org](mailto:admin@Enablingeducators.org) for details about your membership. Please renew your membership for the 2025 calendar year by 1 July 2025.

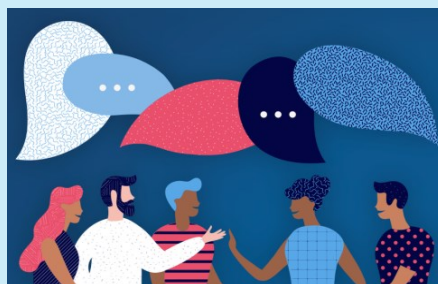
Members receive many perks including discounted conference registration rates and opportunities to apply for small grants.

### 'INVITE A FRIEND'

If you have a colleague who is interested in Enabling education but is not yet a NAEAA member, please feel free to share this newsletter with them. We would love to welcome new members.

### 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/>

NAEEA  
USQ College  
West Street, Toowoomba QLD 4350  
[admin@Enablingeducators.org](mailto:admin@Enablingeducators.org)

# A Quality Framework for Enabling Education

## Applying Sen’s Capability Approach

**Amartya Sen's Capability Approach (CA)** offers a robust way to assess human development by focusing on the opportunities, or ‘capabilities,’ individuals have to achieve what they value. In Enabling education, this framework shifts our focus from traditional academic outcomes to the broader capacities that support students' flourishing, including cultural, social, and personal development.

### Towards a Quality Framework



#### Comprehensive Evaluation of Student Capabilities

A quality endorsement framework grounded in Sen's CA will evaluate Enabling education programs based on non-traditional metrics, highlighting how they foster capabilities such as critical thinking, self-confidence, and social engagement.



#### Accessible and Supportive Learning Experiences

By emphasising student capabilities, the framework will ensure that institutions create inclusive and supportive environments, empowering students to pursue their educational and life goals.



#### Recognition of Contextual and Institutional Diversity

The CA allows for a nuanced understanding of diverse educational settings, ensuring that the framework acknowledges and accommodates the unique contexts and needs of different institutions.



- Walker, M., & Unterhalter, E. (2007). *Amartya Sen's Capability Approach and Social Justice in Education*. Springer.
- Boni, A., & Walker, M. (2016). *Human Development and Capabilities: Re-imagining the University of the Twenty-First Century*. Routledge.
- [The Capabilities Approach Website: HDCA](#) – Resources and case studies on applying the capability approach in education.

## Why Use Sen’s Capability Approach?

### Empowers Students

- Positions student agency and well-being alongside traditional measures of academic attainment
- Promotes environments where students take control of their learning, rather than merely adapting to existing academic structures

### Promotes Equity & Inclusion

- Addresses inequalities and historical injustices
- Recognises the experiences of First Nations peoples and other underrepresented groups
- Ensures education systems provide equitable access to resources for all students, irrespective of background

### Adopts a Holistic View

- Expands focus from academic achievement to overall well-being and social integration
- Fosters belonging within the university environment

### Fosters Flexibility

- Advocates for adaptive learning environments for diverse student learning requirements
- Enables students to succeed on their own terms

# A Quality Framework for Enabling Education

## Applying Sen's Capability Approach

### Starting Point: a List of Student Capabilities

The list of student capabilities for Enabling education in Australia was developed through a collaborative process involving a multi-university working group from the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia (NAEEA). This process drew on extensive collective experience in Enabling education and incorporated insights from existing research and feedback from students to ensure the list was relevant and practical. The framework guiding the development of this list was designed to ensure that it is thorough, balanced, and responsive to the diverse needs of the Enabling education sector. It has at its heart the social justice ethos of Enabling education.

### Get Involved: Shape the Future of Enabling Education

We invite you to contribute to refining this draft list of student capabilities. As practitioners in Enabling education, your insights are vital to ensuring the relevance and effectiveness of the developing framework. Your feedback will directly influence the list, helping it better meet the needs of both students and educators. Join us in this collaborative effort to create a more inclusive and impactful tool for the Enabling education community.



Have your say at our workshop at the NAEEA Conference in Darwin, Dec. '24



Scan the QR code to complete the survey

With thanks: Jonathan Green, Charmaine Davis, Jill Lawrence, and the NAEEA Quality Working Group



### The List of Capabilities

This draft list offers a structured framework of capabilities-building for Enabling students in Australia, starting with cultural and epistemic empowerment, followed by equitable knowledge acquisition and identity development. It then progresses through personalised growth, autonomy, and well-being, culminating in collaborative learning communities and barrier-free, socially just participation in university life.

- 1 Cultural and Epistemic Empowerment.** Ensure that students can access, contribute to, and shape knowledge in ways that honour diverse epistemologies, particularly Indigenous ways of knowing. Address historical injustices and foster a respectful educational environment where all voices are valued.
- 2 Equitable Knowledge Acquisition.** Provide foundational knowledge and resources to bridge gaps in understanding. Ensure that all students, regardless of their prior educational experiences, can engage meaningfully with academic content.
- 3 Equitable Identity Development.** Create a learning environment that supports students in developing their identity while respecting diverse backgrounds. Ensure that adaptive and culturally responsive resources empower students to succeed without compromising their personal and cultural values.
- 4 Personalised Academic and Social Growth.** Support students in flourishing academically and socially during their transition to university. Tailor support systems to meet diverse needs, enabling intellectual development that respects individual and cultural differences.
- 5 Autonomy, Well-being and Belonging.** Promote personal autonomy, ensuring students can make meaningful choices and act on them. Foster a sense of belonging in a university environment free from systemic barriers, where diverse identities are respected.
- 6 Collaborative Learning Communities.** Encourage participation in inclusive learning communities that foster collaboration, mutual respect, and shared responsibility. Ensure all voices are heard, and all students can engage fully in their learning.
- 7 Commitment to Social Justice.** Cultivate an understanding of social justice and a commitment to addressing epistemic and historical injustices. Create equitable learning environments that are responsive to underrepresented communities, especially First Nations people.
- 8 Barrier-free University Participation.** Ensure students can fully participate in university life, including governance and decision-making processes. Remove systemic barriers to ensure that all students, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, can engage fully in the university experience.