

# Editorial

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## *Welcome to 2022*

In 2022 we are still dealing with the impact of COVID-19 across the tertiary education sector and the themes and topics of submissions the Journal has been receiving recently, is indicative of the challenges being faced by staff and students. We recognise the disruption and increased workload demands on academic and professional staff in these times of unprecedented change and we **acknowledge and thank** all our reviewers for their ongoing dedication to supporting the Journal. *Student Success* currently has a pool of more than 100 reviewers, some of which have been reviewing for the Journal for more than a decade. All reviewers are experts in their disciplinary fields and importantly, have a profound understanding of the student experience in higher education. *Student Success* would not be the Journal it is without them. **Thank you!**

We are also very pleased to announce a new national indexing opportunity for the Journal. The [Learning and Teaching Repository](#) is a curated space that indexes the work of Australian learning and teaching researchers, much of which was funded through grants and fellowships by the Australian Government funded Office for Learning and Teaching (OLT) and its predecessor institutions. It provides a set of quality resources on key learning and teaching topics for practitioners.

In late 2021 the Repository undertook a pilot project with the [Student Success](#) journal and the associated [STARS Conference](#) to determine the value of indexing and linking to current open access (OA) teaching and learning research. The pilot work involved a range of identifying activities to match published articles, practice reports and conference presentations with OLT project outcomes and dissemination products.

There is significant value in this activity. Firstly, indexing OA published research and practice maintains and validates the currency of the Repository as a cross-institutional collection of Australian learning and teaching research – a subject-specific repository that is currently lacking in the sector. Secondly, indexing content from *Student Success* and the STARS Conference (and eventually other OA learning and teaching specific publications) enables current research and emerging issues and initiatives to be made more accessible. The value to researchers and authors is increased visibility and engagement with the scholarship (and improved discoverability obviously equals an increase in citations).

The first general issue of *Student Success* for 2022 publishes accepted articles under the broad remit of student engagement, this time with authors from Australia, New Zealand, the UK and the U.S.

The second issue for 2022 is dedicated to those accepted peer reviewed articles submitted to the Journal in conjunction with the annual [STARS Conference](#). This year's Conference will be held online 4-7 July.



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The third issue will present articles and practice reports in a special issue *Fostering Connections in Higher Education: Inclusive Pedagogies And Practices*. Guest Editors are Katelyn Barney (UQ, Australia), Nicole Crawford (Curtin University, Australia) and Janine Delahunty (UOW, Australia)

## Articles

**Elizabeth Serventy and Bill Allen** report on doctoral research into six Generation 1.5 undergraduates navigating one academic year in one Western Australian university. Generation 1.5 is a term used to identify a diverse cohort of refugee youth studying English as a second language. In *Generation 1.5 learners: Removing the mask of student invisibility and recognising the learning disconnections that marred their academic journeys*, the authors discuss how these Generation 1.5 participants managed their studies and their lives through the metaphor of an academic highway journey.

Also from Western Australia, authors **Lydia Edwards and Brendan Ritchie** profile their institution's academic enabling program in *Challenging and confronting: The role of humanities in fostering critical thinking, cultural competency and an evolution of worldview in enabling education*. Within Edith Cowan University's UniPrep course, an introductory Humanities unit is offered to students as one of two electives alongside three other core units. This article suggests that the inclusion of Humanities within an academic enabling program can enhance students' preparedness for undergraduate study and life beyond university on several levels.

From the United States, the experience of 'local students' (students who attend college or university in the same city they attended high school) is the focus of a study by **Lisa Johnson and Nila Wiese**. *Local students at university: Narrative descriptions of lived experiences* examine the beliefs and experiences reflected by self-narratives which suggest unique challenges that affect local students' university outcomes. With awareness of these experiences and beliefs, institutions of higher education could tailor programs to benefit local students to improve their sense of well-being, which may improve retention and academic success.

The article *Enhancing success at university: Understanding our students through their learning careers* discusses a study that started from the premise that we can better support our students when we know who they are. **Felicity Reid and Janis Davidson** draw on the work of Bourdieu and the concept of learning careers and the importance of the development of social, academic and emotional capital on the journey towards success.

The effect of COVID-19 on student engagement and wellbeing is the focus of two articles in this issue:

*Students' experience of online university education during the COVID-19 pandemic: Relationships to psychological health* examines students' experience of online learning, studying, and assessment during the pandemic. From New Zealand, **Rebecca Slykerman, Eileen Li and Edwin Mitchell** collected data from near 500 undergraduate students and found that surprisingly, student psychological health improved over a semester during which university education delivery shifted entirely to an online format.

*Academics' narratives of productive learning cultures during covid-19 emergency remote teaching in Australia* offers a perspective of the staff teaching experience during COVID-19. From Bond University, Australia, **Marilyn Mitchell, Chelsea Gill and Sven Brodmerkel** apply sociocultural learning theory to describe the learning cultures that academics at a small Australian university cultivated during synchronous emergency remote teaching (ERT) at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

## Practice Reports

The Charles Sturt University Retention Team's retention model is evaluated by **Kelly Linden**. The Retention Model synergistically overlays curriculum design and student support and ensures academics embed best practice transition pedagogy and learning engagement activities into key first-year subjects. Every aspect of this program supports equity student groups that are over-represented at this regional Australian university and this type of programs presents an excellent example of practice that can be applicable in other contexts.

Finally, **Sandra Gonzales, Stefanie Baier and Ethriam Brammer** report on practices from a successful Latinx Studies learning community model at an urban research-intensive university in the Midwestern United States. By sharing the implementation of high impact practices (HIPs) at their institution, the authors hope others can investigate, replicate or expand the success experienced by this one Latinx studies program.

***Please cite this article as:***

Nelson, K., & Creagh, T. (2022). Editorial. *Student Success*, 13(1), i-iii. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.2302>

***Student Success: A journal exploring the experiences of students in tertiary education***



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