

Editorial

Karen Nelson

Editor-in-Chief

Tracy Creagh

Managing Editor

Welcome to 2023

Issue 1 of Volume 14 is published at an exciting and challenging time for education. The availability of generative artificial intelligence (AI) tools is causing disruption across sectors. Responses range from complete bans in some compulsory education and tertiary institutions, to putting in place creative ways to deploy these new technologies as productive learning and work tools. The concerns about the risks to integrity of assessment and reputational risks to institutions and sectors are valid and also require close attention. In a short time, a lot of advice has been offered and forums discussing approaches to integrating generative AI into work as well as assessment practices abound. The *Student Success* team has been watching these developments with great interest. We believe these tools have utility for both learning practice and helping build students' capacity to succeed. We look forward to receiving evidence-based submissions on this important topic for future issues. In this general issue we present a broad spectrum of articles and practice reports on student engagement, this time with authors from Australia, South Africa, Canada and the US.

Issue 2, 2023 will be dedicated to peer reviewed articles accepted for publication in the Journal in conjunction with the annual [STARS Conference](#). This year's Conference is being held in conjunction with the [Australasian Mental Health and Higher Education Collaboration \(AMHHEC\)](#). STARS and AMHHEC have much in common. Both groups focus on interprofessional collegiality, the facilitation of proactive collaborations, and community connections. It is timely to bring these two groups together with a strong focus on student and staff mental health and wellbeing in higher education.

The important focus on wellbeing continues into Issue 3, 2023. The third issue will present articles and practice reports in a special issue *The Contribution of Educator Wellbeing to Achieving Student Success* curated by guest editors, Associate Professor Deanna Grant-Smith and Dr Melinda Laundon from Queensland University of Technology (QUT), Australia.

Articles

From the University of New England (UNE) Australia, **Traci-Ann Garrad and Huw Nolan** report on how the implementation of a unit design utilising the principles of the Universal Design for Learning (UDL) framework in an inclusive education unit resulted in increased student engagement rates, unit satisfaction factor ratings and a noticeable decrease in student attrition.

Persistence and success are the focus of **Beverley McClusky and Bill Allen's** article which examines the perspectives of Indigenous Emirati, Muslim women at one public university in the United Arab Emirates. Findings are presented within Vincent Tinto's (2017) framework: goals; sense of belonging; self-efficacy; responses to curriculum; and their impact on students' motivation.

Remaining motivated is crucial to enable continued focus and success for university students. **Moeniera Moosa and Peter J. O. Aloka** from South Africa outline themes for success for first-year higher education students in a public university in South



Except where otherwise noted, content in this journal is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence](#). As an open access journal, articles are free to use with proper attribution. ISSN: 2205-0795

Africa. The study adopted a phenomenological qualitative research design and participants included over 300 first-year students from the University of the Witwatersrand in Johannesburg.

From Southern Cross University, **Johanna Nieuwoudt** compares a traditional delivery model to a shorter delivery model (i.e., the Southern Cross Model) in terms of students' psychological distress, their perceived time pressure, and academic performance. The author then considers whether the Model helps them to better manage the normal stresses of university life.

More often than not, the learners who may need help the most will seek it the least. These are some of the findings from **Lindsey Voisin, Casey Phillips and Veronica Afonso** from Nipissing University, Canada. The authors wanted to understand what influences students' decisions to seek academic support and what could be changed to make services more accessible and engaging.

From Victoria University, Australia, **Laurie A Chapin, Humberto Oraison, Thinh Nguyen, Sera Osmani and Emily Keohane** report on an Australian-first pilot orientation program with first-in-family (FiF) students. This study suggests that a orientation program in the transition period, focused on increasing confidence in students, does, to some degree, give them a head start in university.

Practice Reports

Lorrie Comeford from Salem State University, US, reports on the effect of a revised attendance policy on attendance and course outcomes for two populations of students: introductory general chemistry students and upper-level chemistry majors. This result suggests that introductory students would benefit from course policies with specific expectations for attendance.

From Curtin University, Australia, **Paul Cozens, Kent Turkich and Shane Greive** highlight changes made to a first-year unit in an Urban and Regional Planning degree, and the need and benefits of enhancing the cultural competency of those who both teach and learn about urban planning.

At University Technology Sydney (UTS), Australia, students with insufficient language proficiency who cannot attend the standard subject-specific academic language development program are directed to an alternative discipline-specific program – the Language Development Tutorial in Block mode. **Joseph Yeo and Gemma O'Donoghue** report on this alternate discipline-specific program designed for Business undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Finally, **Heather Morris-Eyton and Erica Pretorius** investigate the contribution of using a 'digital promise' towards developing accountability in the learning process during the first year at the University of Johannesburg, South Africa. The findings indicate that creating an awareness of taking personal responsibility for learning success, using a digital promise, could be a progressive tool to scaffold the first-year teaching and learning journey.

As always, we commend the authors for their significant contributions to this issue. As always we acknowledge and thank the reviewers and the editorial team for their continued focus on quality research on the student experience in tertiary education.

References

Tinto, V. (2017) Through the eyes of students. *Journal of College Student Retention: Research, Theory & Practice*, 19(3), 254–269. <https://doi.org/10.1177%2F1521025115621917>

Please cite this article as:

Nelson, K., & Creagh, T. (2023). Editorial. *Student Success*, 14(1), i-ii. <https://doi.org/10.5204/ssj.2860>

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



Except where otherwise noted, content in this journal is licensed under a [Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International Licence](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/). As an open access journal, articles are free to use with proper attribution. ISSN: 2205-0795