

Editorial

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Welcome to 2025

In 2025 we are once again joining with friends and colleagues to host the [Student Success Conference](#). Like 2024, the STARS Conference, Equity Practitioners in Higher Education Australasia (EPHEA) and the National Association of Enabling Educators of Australia (NAEEA) are coming together to host the Conference. STARS, EPHEA and NAEEA believe there is a benefit in bringing together organisations whose key focus is student success, in a collegial forum to disseminate current research, good practice and progressive ideas and opportunities focused on enhancing the student learning experience. This Conference remains a key supporter of the Journal and we look forward to seeing many of you there. The Journal will publish its annual **Conference issue** following the Conference, which is being held from June 30-July 2 in Cairns, Australia.

We also look forward to the publication this year of a very special issue: **A Generation of Transition Pedagogy: Looking Back, Looking Forward** – Guest editors, Professor Ryan Naylor (University of Sydney, Australia) and Associate Professor Jessica Marrington (University of Southern Queensland, Australia). Sally Kift's ALTC Fellowship that led to the development of “transition pedagogy” began nearly 20 years ago, in 2006. Reflecting on nearly two decades of transition pedagogy provides a unique opportunity to assess its impact and envision its future potential. This special issue aims to gather diverse perspectives and insights that will not only celebrate the achievements thus far but also critically address what remains to be done to continue evolving and enhancing student transitions in tertiary education.

Since 2010, Queensland University of Technology (QUT) Library has hosted online academic journals on Open Journal Systems (OJS), a journal management and publishing system developed by the Public Knowledge Project (PKP). OJS is open-source software installed and controlled locally, providing a management system where editors can manage their publishing requirements. In 2024 it was decided to migrate the Journal from the QUT-hosted OJS to the cloud-hosted PKP vendor – supported by the University of Southern Queensland (UniSQ) Library. The smooth transition is indicative of both academic libraries commitment to open access publishing, and particularly Diamond journal publishing (community-driven and led, no fees to authors or readers, copyright remains with author and open licenses). While the look and feel of the Journal is a little different, it is business as usual and we are grateful for the continued support from the sector to publish best practice research on student engagement and success.



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Articles

Thu Dinh Xuan Pham, Levon Blue, Angela Baeza, Peter Anderson, Congcong Xing and Melanie Saward investigate the factors that influence completion rates amongst Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander student in Australia. The authors discuss their Higher Education Success Factor (HESF) Model and outline the opportunities for university policymakers and educators to act upon their findings and identify any potential weaknesses within their institutions.

In a changing educational landscape, student engagement remains a prominent issue in research and practice. **Lesley Irvine and Sam Cunningham** explore engagement from the student's perspective across multiple disciplines, year levels and delivery modes using over 13,000 Student Evaluation of Teaching survey comments where students have used the word "engage" (or derivative) in response to individual educators.

University students, working with First Nations communities, need to build skills in culturally responsive practice. From the Northern Territory in Australia, **Alice Cairns, Narelle Campbell, Malama Gray, Debby Mauger, Chris Rissel, Murphy Dhayirra Yunupingu, Danielle Rodda, Chris Hince, Amy O'Hara and Kylie Stothers** examine the experience of allied health students completing service-learning placements in First Nations communities.

University enabling programs provide historically underrepresented students with aspirational gateways and the academic skills and knowledges essential for success at university. **Anita Maclaurin, Rebekah Sturniolo-Baker, Sue Shaw and Deb Monteith** argue for a nuanced measurement of success, exploring the efficacy of enabling programs from the students' perspective to reduce marginalising the lived experience of enabling students.

Individual differences are important predictors of academic success. A sense of purpose in life is gaining increasing attention as a key individual difference factor to foster in university students. **Jacob Alderson, Nathan Lewis, Patrick Hill and Nicholas Turiano** examine whether a sense of purpose in life, a dispositional tendency to pursue goals and activities in line with one's overarching life direction, predicted better academic success across several years of university.

And from the UK, **David Gilani, Daniel McArthur and Liz Thomas** take a quasi-experimental approach by evaluating the impact of a newly developed agentic belonging workshop at two English universities. Their study contributes promising findings for how social belonging interventions can be taken forward within the higher education context in the United Kingdom.

Practice Reports

Katelyn Barney and Tracey Bunda explore the development and impact of two podcasts developed and hosted in the university setting. Drawing on their experiences as academics working closely together, one non-Indigenous (Barney) and the other Ngugi/Wakka Wakka (Bunda), they discuss the reasons for choosing the podcast medium, the development of the podcasts and their emerging impact. Importantly Barney and Bunda reveal how podcasts are contributing to improving practices in two contexts: Indigenising university curricula and improving outreach programs for Indigenous students.

James Wakefield and Simone Grabowski examine the efficacy of a redesigned induction session to enhance and sustain student connectedness, addressing ongoing concerns relating to student isolation. The authors socially engineered the group formation process prior to students undertaking a group activity at undergraduate Business induction sessions. The intention of the activity was for students to collaboratively problem-solve components of the university experience, learn where to seek information and develop connections with peers from day one of their university experience.

From Aotearoa New Zealand, **Darryl Cochrane** describes the application of scenario-based learning to improve awareness of interpersonal skills in sport and exercise students. The implementation of scenario-based health and exercise consultations provided students with an immersive and effective learning experience, which promoted the development of the interpersonal skills required for successful client consultations.

Tammy Jordan Wyatt, Matt Keneson, Claudia Rueda, Angelica Barrera, Amy Buechler-Steubing, Rebecca Karoff and Mark Appleford detail a large, US public, Hispanic Serving Institution's (HSI) approach to tackling barriers to timely graduation through the implementation of a virtual support center, the Graduation Help Desk (GHD). As a successful, cost-effective, virtual service model, the GHD is instrumental in supporting undergraduate students, specifically at-risk and difficult-to-reach student populations, preventing graduation delays and lowering student costs.

And finally from the UK, **Anna Lise Gordon, Marta Ortega Vega, Nikki Anghileri, Jonathan Nassar, Olivia Scott, Katharina Stegmann and Patricia Zunszain** detail how three London-based universities and a specialist National Health Service mental health provider combined expertise for a two-year project aimed at designing, delivering and evaluating a package of psychoeducation interventions. Co-created and co-designed with students, the project provided innovative transition support including accessible face-to-face workshops, drop-in sessions and an online resource package to maximise flexibility for students.

Congratulations to 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. We welcome your feedback on the new issue and look forward to continuing the dissemination of good practice via the [STARS Conference](#) and *Student Success*.

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