



University of
**Southern
Queensland**



24 October 2025

2025 Pathways Education and Research Colloquium: Advancing the Agenda

Welcome

On behalf of UniSQ College at the University of Southern Queensland I welcome you to this colloquium. The theme of this event is “A New Agenda for Pathways Education and Research.”

Widening participation pathways are an important success story at many Australian higher education institutions. This success can be measured by the many thousands of students who have entered higher education through these pathways. UniSQ has offered pathways programs for over 30 years.

Although these programs are well established, research into this area does not attract the profile it deserves. The intention of this colloquium is to excite and catalyse a national research agenda for this field. There has already been important and excellent research into this area. Yet at the national level the Australian Research Council's Field of Research Codes do not recognise 'enabling education' or 'pathways education' as a discrete field of research. National-level energy can begin the process of building a critical mass of high-quality research into this field, creating momentum and profile.

Today's event is intended to bring together the best of current research, providing a platform for discussion and impetus for the next steps in achieving the national recognition this area deserves.



Professor Ian Wells

Head of UniSQ College and Dean (Pathways Education)
University of Southern Queensland

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The Colloquium 2025 Team

Julia Goodman	Associate Professor Jonathan Green
Geoff Keating	Associate Professor Shahab Abdulla
Dr Duc-Anh An-Vo	Dr Niharika Singh
Perizat Newman	Dr Abdurazaq Amar
Sophie Eigeland	

General Information

Internet Access

Wireless Internet is available throughout the venue – Eduroam or UniSQ-Visitor.

For ICT support, please see the [instructions](#) or visit [iconnect](#) located at Atrium (B Block).

Mobile Phones

Please ensure your phone is switched off or on silent during all sessions.

Lost Property

All lost property can be handed in or collected from the registration desk.

Please talk to our friendly staff, Julia Goodman, Perizat Newman or Sophie Eigeland if you require any assistance during the event.



Social and Networking

Join us at [Ballistic Beer Co](#)

4:30-5:30 pm

Full Program

Program				
AEST	Room 1: D Auditorium (D Block)	Room 2: B204A (B Block)	Room 3: B207A (B Block)	Room 4: B210 (B Block)
08:30-09:00	Registration			
09:00-09:25	Acknowledgement of Country Professor Ian Wells Opening Address Professor Karen Nelson (Vice-Chancellor, UniSQ) Chair: Professor Ian Wells			
09:25-10:25	Keynote Address Professor Andrew Harvey Chair: Professor Ian Wells			
10:25 – 10:55	Morning Tea			
11:00-11:55		Session 1 Parallel Sessions		
		Chair: Prof. Jill Lawrence	Chair: Jane Zaun	Chair: Charlene Jackson
		<u>Research Talk</u> (25 min) 01A Examining Discourse and Identity in Enabling Education: The Emergence of a Sub-Discipline Charmaine Davis and A/Prof. Jonathan Green (UniSQ)	<u>Research Talk</u> (25 min) 01B Bridging the GenAI Gap: Scaffolded Approaches to Student Engagement, Belonging, and Success in Transition Dr Amara Atif (UTS)	<u>Research Talk</u> (25 min) 01C Reflections on Designing In-School Enabling Courses Dr Fabiane Ramos (UniSQ)
		<u>Provocation</u> (25 min) 02A Elevating the student experience: using journey mapping to better understand every student cohort Leandi Newth and Hannah Schmith (TUA)	<u>Research Talk</u> (25 min) 02B Understanding Engagement and Disengagement in Regional Outline Enabling Courses Dr Takahiro Yokoyama and Dr Charlie Thomson (UniSQ)	<u>Research Talk</u> (25 min) 02C Developing a Welcome Academy at UniSQ Dr Rian Roux, Dr Lindsay Helwig and A/Prof. Shahab Abdulla (UniSQ)

	Room 1: Auditorium (D Block)	Room 2: B204A (B Block)	Room 3: B207A (B Block)	Room 4: B210 (B Block)
12:00- 13:00	Session 2 Panel Session			
	Host: Geoff Keating (UniSQ)			
	Panel Discussion Professor Andrew Harvey (Griffith) Associate Professor Katelyn Barney (UQ) Professor Sarah O'Shea (CSU) Karen Seary (CQU)			
13:00- 13:55	Lunch			
14:00- 14:55	Session 3 Parallel Sessions			
		Chair: Dr Niharika Singh	Chair: A/Prof. Shahab Abdulla	Chair: Dr Fabiane Ramos
		<u>Provocation</u> (25 min) 03A Designing for transition: Reimagining first-year curriculum for creative cohorts Elicia Simon (TUA)	<u>Research Talk</u> (25 min) 03B Critical Enabling Pedagogy – An approach to tackle the goals of the HE Accord A/Prof. Sarah Hattam and Dr Tanya Weiler (UniSA)	<u>Research Talk</u> (25 min) 03C Transitional Frictions: Blending theoretical frameworks to clarify students' understanding of entering university from vocational training Ana Larsen (CQU)
		<u>Provocation</u> (25 min) 04A Operational and Equity Challenges in Achieving True Tertiary Harmonisation Craig Poole	<u>Research Talk</u> (25 min) 04B From Displacement to Degrees: Credentialing Pathways for Refugees in Higher Education Dr Anup Shrestha (UniSQ)	<u>Provocation</u> (25 min) 04C Tertiary Education Institutions as Elders - Transitional Capacity Building Geoff Keating (UniSQ)

	Room 1: D Auditorium (D Block)	Room 2: B204A (B Block)	Room 3: B207A (B Block)	Room 4: B210 (B Block)
15:00-15:55	Session 4 Parallel Sessions			
		Chair: Dr Niharika Singh	Chair: A/Prof. Shahab Abdulla	
		Research Talk (25 min) 05A Valuing Difference, Elevating Voice: Culturally Responsive Support for CALD Students in JCU Pathways Dr Dongmei Li and Lisa Moody (JCU)	Research Talk (25 min) 05B Mapping the Field: A Profile of Australian University Pathway Teachers Nelson H. N. Lo (USYD)	
		Research Talk (25 min) 06A Beyond Job-Ready: Considering Graduate Employability for Equity Students Dr Tanya Weiler (UniSA) (TAFE Qld)	Research Talk (25 min) 06B To affinity and beyond!: Student (and staff) engagement, belonging, and success through hip-hop pedagogy and affinity groups Dr Charlie Thomson (UniSQ)	
16:00-16:30	Journal Launch and Closing Professor Ian Wells & A/Prof. Jonathan Green			
16:30-17:30	Social Function and Networking Ballistic Beer Co.			

Zoom Links

Keynote Speaker:

<https://unisq.zoom.us/j/83092183978?pwd=ksVISmpuaC3J8C1bxmprihr6pwj8YR.1>

Passcode: 985800

Panel Discussion:

<https://unisq.zoom.us/j/87491530929?pwd=uHb8SIJ3Q3GEVskExJIO4JLrCsJyCv.1>

Passcode: 816820

Keynote Address

‘Pathways into Australian higher education: equity, mobility, and opportunity.’

Professor Andrew Harvey

Director, Pathways in Place Program – Griffith University, Logan

Director (Access and Achievement)



Professor Andrew Harvey is Director of the Pathways in Place program at Griffith University, focussed on the empowerment of Indigenous, Māori and Pasifika communities in Australia. He also serves as Director of Access and Achievement at the University, and is a member of the Grants and Fellowships Committee of the Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success. Andrew is lead editor of *Student Equity in Australian Higher Education: Twenty-five years of A Fair Chance for All* (Springer, 2016) and has attracted over 30 external grants on pathways and equity issues across the student lifecycle.

Notes

Abstracts

01A

Examining Discourse and Identity in Enabling Education: The Emergence of a Sub-Discipline

Charmaine Davis and Associate Professor Jonathan Green
University of Southern Queensland

Enabling education in Australia has grown rapidly in scale and significance, with a parallel increase in scholarly output over the past decade. This paper explores the extent to which this expanding body of literature reflects the emergence of a distinct sub-discipline within higher education. Drawing on sociocultural discourse analysis (SCDA), we examine how Enabling educators use language to construct shared understandings, articulate professional identity, and position Enabling education within the broader tertiary landscape. The analysis focuses on the development of an Enabling discourse—centred on equity, pedagogy, curriculum, and learning and teaching—and how this compares with dominant discourses in higher education. Combining corpus linguistics with close textual analysis, we trace recurring themes, values, and conceptual frames in Enabling scholarship from 1993 to the present. In doing so, we consider whether Enabling education is not only a sectoral initiative but also an emerging field of academic inquiry, with its own epistemological and pedagogical foundations. This work contributes to broader discussions about disciplinary identity, legitimacy, and the role of Enabling education in advancing inclusive and socially just higher education.

01B

Bridging the GenAI Gap: Scaffolded Approaches to Student Engagement, Belonging, and Success in Transition

Dr Amara Atif
University of Technology Sydney

Students entering higher education through enabling programs, vocational education, or other non-traditional pathways face multiple transition challenges in their first year. These include adapting to new academic expectations, developing a sense of belonging, and building confidence in unfamiliar learning environments. The rapid emergence of Generative AI (GenAI) adds another layer of complexity, as uneven prior exposure to these tools can heighten uncertainty, increase feelings of isolation, and undermine academic confidence. This presentation outlines an intentional, scaffolded GenAI literacy model embedded within core first-year subjects designed to support students in transition. The model begins with introductory “starter kits” and clear ethical guidelines, then progresses to discipline-relevant applications, critical evaluation of AI-generated content, and reflective portfolio tasks that link learning to personal and professional goals. By engaging students in structured GenAI activities such as brainstorming ideas, refining drafts, and analysing case studies - they are encouraged to see themselves as capable, resourceful learners in a contemporary academic setting. Pilot findings indicate that this approach reduces GenAI-related anxiety by demystifying the tools, fosters peer collaboration that strengthens belonging, and builds academic identity through authentic, confidence-building practice. The session will share adaptable strategies for embedding GenAI literacy into transition-focused curricula to promote equitable access, engagement, and success.

01C

Reflections on Designing In-School Enabling Courses

Dr Angela Jones, Dr Fiona Navin, Selena Dhondea-Tenakov, Michael Howie and Shaz Attree
Edith Cowan University

Dr Joanne Liscandro and Anita Maclaurin
Murdoch University

Dr Johanna Nieuwoudt
Southern Cross University

Dr Fabiane Ramos
University of Southern Queensland

In early 2024, four Australian universities—Edith Cowan University, Murdoch University, University of Southern Queensland, and Southern Cross University—initiated a benchmarking project focused on in-school Enabling courses, as part of a broader ACSES-funded study examining the effectiveness of in-school Enabling programs. Guided by NAEAA's benchmarking framework, this was the first national study of its kind. The project was developed in response to the Universities Accord Final Report (2024), which emphasised equitable access to higher education for under-represented groups. Its aim was to move towards standardising the educational experience of embedded high school Enabling courses, including alignment in holistic outcomes, assessment approaches, and grading practices. The benchmarking revealed strong similarities across courses in partnership models, goals, curriculum, programs of study, and learning outcomes. This presentation shares findings from the benchmarking report, as well as qualitative insights from students who have completed in-school enabling, and educators teaching the programs, and quantitative student outcomes. This is in order to highlight best practice in course design to ensure in-school Enabling courses are providing rigorous and supportive pathways to further education.

02A

Elevating the Student Experience: Using Journey Mapping to Better Understand Every Student Cohort

Leandi Newth and Hannah Schmith
Torrens University Australia

Journey mapping is increasingly recognised as a powerful tool for understanding the complexities of the student experience in higher education. By focusing on empathy, behaviour and pain points, it enables institutions to design more user-centred solutions and optimise each stage of the student journey to enhance satisfaction (Popli et al., 2023).

Our research explores how embedding journey mapping into formal assessment design can reveal barriers and opportunities to improve first-year student onboarding and transition. For each academic intake, students create their own journey maps as part of a formal assessment, capturing emotional, academic and social challenges across five key touchpoints: application, enrolment, subject selection, orientation, and the early weeks of study. This reflective process helps students visualise their educational trajectory and articulate both personal and systemic barriers to success.

Unlike traditional evaluations such as end-of-study surveys, journey mapping uncovers deeper insights into the student experience (Davies et al., 2010). It offers educators a framework for continuous improvement through iterative cycles of reflection, action and evaluation (Ludwiczak, 2023).

This session invites participants to share strategies and practices, and reflect on whether they truly understand the student experience at their institution. The discussion will contribute to broader efforts to widen participation in higher education, with a focus on supporting underrepresented groups including international students, neurodiverse students, first-in-family students and those requiring accessibility support.

02B

Understanding Engagement and Disengagement in Regional Outline Enabling Courses

Dr Takahiro Yokoyama and Dr Charlie Thomson
University of Southern Queensland

Online courses are now widely offered across higher education, yet completion rates remain relatively low - a challenge often linked to student engagement. This presentation summarises initial insights and literature review findings from research into patterns of engagement and disengagement in a regional enabling programme supporting high school students' transition to university. Learning management system analytics show limited student interaction with key interventions such as forums and drop-in sessions, developed using the Online Engagement Framework for Higher Education (Redmond et al., 2018). Recognising that visible inactivity does not always indicate disengagement, the study employs a mixed-methods approach, informed by the Community of Inquiry framework and Self-Determination Theory, to examine authentic engagement dynamics in this context. A comprehensive literature review of enabling and online university education underpins the analysis. The presentation will also outline a planned student survey for 2026, designed to further investigate student motivation, engagement patterns, and barriers. Insights from this research aim to inform more effective strategies for enhancing engagement and success in online enabling programmes.

02C

Developing a Welcome Academy at UniSQ

Dr Rian Roux, Dr Lindsay Helwig and Associate Professor Shahab Abdulla
University of Southern Queensland

This presentation will overview the Welcome Academy initiative at UniSQ, a research-driven response to the educational and employment disparities experienced by refugee students in Toowoomba, Australia. Employing a human-centred design thinking framework, the project is currently progressing through a multi-phase, mixed-methods approach to develop a replicable educational model suitable for higher education institutions within liberal democracies.

Based on the principles of engaged scholarship, the objectives of the Welcome Academy are fourfold: (1) to enhance educational access and success through tailored programs that support language acquisition, foundational skills, and discipline-specific mentorship; (2) to foster community engagement by building strategic partnerships with schools, government agencies, NGOs, businesses and community groups, (3) to improve employment access through targeted initiatives including scholarships,

mentorship, and industry connections; and (4) Undertake research focused on the educational and employment challenges and opportunities relevant to refugee populations.

03A

Designing for Transition: Reimagining First-Year Curriculum for Creative Cohorts

Elicia Simon

Torrens University Australia

Transitioning to higher education is a pivotal phase for students, requiring targeted support systems, curriculum design, and engagement strategies (Kift et al., 2010). While transition pedagogy is well theorised, gaps remain in understanding the unique challenges creative students face—particularly psychological factors such as ‘creative anxiety’ (Goodwin, 2023) and ‘imposter syndrome’ (Shedlosky-Shoemaker, 2024).

This provocation introduces a new first-year subject structured around a discipline-specific transition model designed for creative students. The model comprises four interconnected pillars: onboarding and belonging, academic skills, soft skills, and a unique discipline-specific pillar tailored to the cognitive, emotional, and creative needs of design students.

The subject aims to foster a strong learner identity through design-led pedagogies that scaffold academic literacies, promote reflective practice, self-efficacy and respond to the often-unspoken tensions design students face, such as navigating critique, embracing ambiguity, and forming a creative identity.

This session invites participants to consider: What does a discipline-specific approach to transition look like, and how can curriculum design support access while affirming the diverse and nuanced ways students learn, create and connect?

By sharing early findings and ongoing refinements, this discussion provokes critical dialogue to advance transition pedagogy beyond one-size-fits-all models toward more inclusive, imaginative, and discipline-responsive approaches.

03B

Critical Enabling Pedagogy – An Approach to Tackle the Goals of the HE Accord

Associate Professor Sarah Hattam and Dr Tanya Weiler

University of South Australia

The Australian Universities Accord outlines an ambitious target: an increase of over 900,000 student enrolments, underpinned by widened participation for cohorts historically under-represented in higher education. This expansion raises a critical challenge: ensuring that increased access is matched by effective pedagogical and institutional support to enable student success. The Accord emphasises the need for renewed curricula, evidence-based teaching approaches, and sustained professional development for educators, supported by targeted funding and the introduction of accredited teaching qualifications. In this presentation, Critical Enabling Pedagogy (CEP) is introduced as a pedagogical framework that directly aligns with these priorities. CEP positions students’ diverse experiences and



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backgrounds as central to the learning process, while maintaining academic rigour through intentional scaffolding, dialogic engagement, and an ethic of care. Implementing CEP requires more than individual goodwill; it necessitates systemic support for educators through ongoing professional learning. Initiatives such as workshops, collaborative action research, and teaching squares provide structured opportunities for reflection, shared practice, and innovation. Such approaches contribute to a dynamic and responsive teaching workforce capable of delivering on the Accord's dual ambitions of equitable access and meaningful achievement. The presentation will examine the theoretical underpinnings of CEP, its alignment with national policy directions, and practical strategies for embedding it within diverse higher education contexts.

03C

Transitional Frictions: Blending Theoretical Frameworks to Clarify Students' Understanding of Entering University from Vocational Training

Ana Larsen

Central Queensland University Australia

A pilot study was conducted in 2016 to explore transition experiences of students entering university from Vocational Education and Training (VET). Whilst the student group began university with competent foundation skills, they still experienced challenges. Self-efficacy, a perceived lack of support and academic workload impacted engagement and success. The authors re-examined the transition experiences in a wider multi-institutional study, applying the Student Engagement Framework (SEF) (Kahu & Nelson, 2018; Kahu et al. 2017). Underpinned by the student voice, authors blend the SEF with the concept of "transitional frictions" developed by Katartzis and Hayward (2020) to create an adapted version of the framework. Pilot study data and preliminary findings from the larger study highlight the effectiveness of the adapted framework. This new framework augments understanding of the power relations affecting the transition, whilst elucidating the holistic student experience.

04A

Operational and Equity Challenges in Achieving True Tertiary Harmonisation

Craig Poole

TAFE Queensland

Li Na

Wuhan College China

Patcharawan Ubonloet

Office of National Economic & Social Development Thailand

Australia faces acute skill shortages amid significant economic transformation, with forecasts indicating 90% of jobs in 2035 requiring tertiary qualifications. (Job and Skills Australia, 2024). The tertiary education system is stratified into Vocational Education and Training (VET) emphasising employment-oriented learning, and Higher Education (HE) adopting a more theoretical and scholarly approach (Department of Education, 2013). Leveraging the complementarity between sectors presents opportunities to increase number of degree-qualified individuals while enhancing the industry relevance and diversity of graduates (Department of Education, 2024). Disparities in prestige and funding between VET and HE remain



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substantial barriers to VET uptake and development of dual-sector qualified graduates (Beddie, 2014; Department of Education, Skills & Employment, 2021). Tertiary harmonisation including greater interoperability between sectors has gained prominence in national policy discourse (Bradley, Noonan, Nugent, & Scales, 2008) with Jobs and Skills Australia (JSA) (2025) identifying harmonisation as a strategic priority to support workforce development. This session will critically examine JSA's representations of VET-HE integration models, particularly their assessment of articulated pathways in terms of operationalisation, scope, and effectiveness given the strong pathways culture within Queensland's tertiary ecosystem. Further, the authors argue that elements within the harmonisation roadmap, especially ongoing inequitable allocation of Commonwealth Supported Places may continue to undermine VET-HE transitions by inadvertently diverting prospective students from VET programmes at the outset of their educational journey (Poole, Toohey, Li, & Zhang, 2017a; Poole, Li, & Toohey, 2017b). The discussion will draw on historical and contemporary enrolment and student success data to illuminate emerging trends and their implications.

04B

From Displacement to Degrees: Credentialing Pathways for Refugees in Higher Education

Dr Anup Shrestha and Anju De Alwis
University of Southern Queensland

As of late 2023, over 117 million people were forcibly displaced globally, with refugee learners facing persistent barriers to accessing tertiary education. Despite global commitments under UN Sustainable Development Goal 4 to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education, refugee enrolment in higher education remains critically low - just 7% worldwide (UNHCR, 2024). This doctoral research investigates how inclusive governance frameworks can support credentialing pathways for displaced learners, addressing challenges such as lost documentation, legal constraints, and fragmented recognition systems. Blockchain technology is a decentralized and tamper-resistant digital technology for storing and verifying data and it offers a promising solution by enabling secure, portable, and user-controlled academic records. However, its ethical and scalable implementation depends on governance models that prioritize transparency, stakeholder collaboration, and flexible verification. Drawing on qualitative insights from 36 stakeholders across 16 countries, including lived experiences of Ukrainian professionals displaced by conflict, this study proposes a governance framework informed by principles from the Internet Governance Forum and UNESCO. By critically engaging with current praxis, the research advances the agenda in pathways education, offering actionable recommendations for institutions, policymakers, and humanitarian actors seeking to design resilient, inclusive, and trustworthy credentialing ecosystems for displaced populations.

04C

Tertiary Education Institutions as Elders – Transitional Capacity Building

Geoff Keating
University of Southern Queensland

The importance of transitional arrangements for Indigenous and first in family students have been identified as key drivers for student success. In this provocation, I will argue that current practices are not fully immersive enough to guarantee positive student outcomes and may instead be perceived as

tokenistic and irrelevant in developing student pathways. Instead, a deeper engagement with young students needs to be established in order to allow for students to develop the cognitive skills and cultural understanding for student success. Furthermore, an extension of school pastoral care processes needs to be extended past matriculation to ensure that students feel supported by trusted adults and leaders.

05A

Valuing Difference, Elevating Voice: Culturally Responsive Support for CALD Students in JCU Pathways

Dr Dongmei Li and Lisa Moody

James Cook University Australia

JCU Pathways is home to many students from culturally and linguistically diverse backgrounds. Each year, on average, over 30% of the student population identify as Indigenous, international, or from non-English-speaking backgrounds (NESB). JCU's enrolment data 2021–2024 indicate a persistent performance gap: Indigenous and NESB students' pass rates remain consistently lower than their non-Indigenous and English-speaking peers. Despite clear evidence of diverse learner needs, there are currently no program-specific initiatives to support these students. Feedback from students highlights the need for increased support in areas such as academic confidence, connection, and cultural affirmation.

The CALD student voice project adopts culturally responsive pedagogy (CRP) as its guiding framework, and is aimed at providing a safe and supportive space to help students further develop foundational academic skills, belonging, and overall well-being during their study in JCU Prep. The project has so far offered the following initiatives:

- Orientation week Pre-for-Prep Day
- Weekly 'Lunch and Learn' sessions
- 'My Story' filming

This presentation presents preliminary findings from a study employing an integrated qualitative approach, combining student-life video reflections with ten semi-structured interviews involving Pathways students. The analysis highlights a strong desire among participants for culturally safe spaces, support in developing academic and English language skills, and meaningful opportunities to share their lived experiences.

This work contributes to broader diversity, equity, and inclusivity goals and offers an evidence-based model for supporting CALD students in enabling programs.

05B

Mapping the Field: A Profile of Australian University Pathway Teachers

Nelson H. N. Lo, David Evans and Ilektra Spandagou
University of Sydney

The value and place of university pathway programs in providing prospective students alternative access points to university education have continued to receive recognition in the most recent Australian Universities Accord (AUA). Students who study in the pathway settings are often less prepared to meet the demands of tertiary education and may require further support prior to entering universities for

various reasons. Hence, it is important to have trained and pedagogically-sound teachers to identify and support the varying needs of these students in university pathways. To ensure quality teaching, the AUA recommended the academic workforces to obtain accredited teaching qualifications and the providers to be more transparent about these data. Considering the paucity of these data, this study adopted convenience sampling and surveyed 123 university teachers ($N=123$) around Australia to answer the question: who teaches in Australian university pathways? Through descriptive analysis, results indicated that university pathway teachers were highly educated: with almost 70% of the participants ($n=85$) holding master's or doctoral qualifications. Nearly 60% of the participants ($n=72$) held a qualification specialised in adult and/or higher education. The profile of university pathway teachers, as well as the implications of the findings, will be discussed in the presentation.

06A

Beyond Job-Ready: Considering Graduate Employability for Equity Students

Dr Tanya Weiler

University of South Australia

Graduate employability policies increasingly frame higher education's purpose as producing "job-ready" graduates. While such policies have generated a proliferation of initiatives including unpaid placements, work-integrated learning, and extra-curricular programs, their accessibility and benefits are not experienced equally. Students from equity backgrounds, particularly those entering via enabling programs, often face structural barriers that limit their participation and compound existing disadvantage (Osborne & Grant-Smith, 2017; Jackson & Dean, 2022; Burke et al., 2020).

This presentation draws on narrative case studies from a larger project on graduate employability to centre the voices of equity students navigating the education-to-employment transition. It reveals how social class and structural inequities can shape their perceptions of opportunity, constrain their engagement with employability-building experiences, and perpetuate an uneven playing field despite their academic success.

This presentation amplifies the lived experiences of Australian students from recognised equity categories whose perspectives are frequently limited in the employability discourse. It considers how policy designed to create fairer pathways from higher education to meaningful employment have contributed to systemic conditions that can disadvantage equity students. Further, it challenges dominant narratives that locate employability solely in individual effort, reframing it as a shared responsibility among institutions, policymakers, and society.

06B

To Affinity and Beyond!: Student (and staff) Engagement, Belonging, and Success Through Hip-hop Pedagogy and Affinity Groups

Dr Charlie Thomson

University of Southern Queensland

For over 50 years, hip-hop culture has been a worldwide phenomenon. Extending the significance of hip-hop as an aesthetic form, hip-hop pedagogies have emerged as accepted approaches in mainstream

schools, particularly in settings with marginalised and disengaged students. While there are numerous international examples of hip-hop pedagogy in educational contexts, the effectiveness of hip-hop pedagogy within the Australian education system has not been explored extensively. Additionally, hip-hop's current influence on young people internationally and specifically in Australian society is difficult to ignore. Much of the current research on hip-hop pedagogy does not highlight how this approach can enable and extend the personal development and professional practice of educators. This presentation will explore the enactment of hip-hop pedagogy by examining the practices of educators in their professional practice. Specifically, attention will be given to the nurturance of collaborative approaches and focus on the collective practice of an affinity group, which involves individuals relating together in a collaborative space based on their shared interests, aspirations and approaches. The research which informs this workshop, is based on data from a group of educators, youth workers and artists, convened as an affinity group, which highlight how hip-hop pedagogies can be applied in diverse educational contexts in Queensland.

Panellists

Geoff Keating (Panel Host)

Geoff is an educator and early career historian whose research examines Colonial and Imperial history and impacts, particularly in the Pacific region with an aim to contextualise political social and economic realities within this space. He also researches and publishes around the development of human rights, with a particular emphasis on the Holocaust, Indigenous development, and Holocaust education. His PhD project centres around the role of outsiders in establishing Australian rule in Papua and New Guinea between the late 19th century until the 1930's.

Associate Professor Katelyn Barney

Katelyn Barney is an Associate Professor in the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies Unit and affiliated with the School of Music at the University of Queensland. Her research focuses on improving pathways for Indigenous students into and through higher education and advancing understandings about the role of collaboration between Indigenous and non-Indigenous people. She has previously held an Equity Fellowship with the Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success (formerly NCSEHE) and has developed a range of resources on evaluating programs for Indigenous students. She is an Australian Learning and Teaching Fellow and also the Managing Editor of *The Australian Journal of Indigenous Education*.

Professor Andrew Harvey

Professor Andrew Harvey is Director of the Pathways in Place program at Griffith University, focussed on the empowerment of Indigenous, Māori and Pasifika communities in Australia. He also serves as Director of Access and Achievement at the University, and is a member of the Grants and Fellowships Committee of the Australian Centre for Student Equity and Success. Andrew is lead editor of *Student Equity in Australian Higher Education: Twenty-five years of A Fair Chance for All* (Springer, 2016) and has attracted over 30 external grants on pathways and equity issues across the student lifecycle.

Professor Sarah O'Shea

Professor Sarah O'Shea is a nationally awarded educator and globally recognised expert in higher education equity. As Distinguished Professor and Dean at Charles Sturt University, Sarah brings over 30 years' experience leading national projects that drive student success and inclusion. Professor O'Shea has secured over \$4 million in research funding and managed \$10 million in federal grants. A Principal Fellow of the HEA, Australian Learning and Teaching Fellow, and Churchill Fellow, she also co-edits the *Research in Higher Education* (SRHE/Routledge) series and serves on global editorial boards, shaping policy, research, and practice across the sector.

Karen Seary

Karen Seary has worked in Higher Education for 27 years, and is currently the Associate Dean, School of Access Education at Central Queensland University, which involves the overall management of the STEPS Course, the Academic Learning Centre and the Language, Literacy and Numeracy Centre. Karen is also the Chair of the National Association of Enabling Educators Australia (NAEEA) bringing together colleagues from 39 Australian universities offering similar course to STEPS.

Presenters

Charmaine Davis

Charmaine has worked in pathways education for 29 years as a lecturer and program coordinator/director. Her research focuses on Australia's Enabling education sector, particularly cross-institutional benchmarking and the ongoing development of the sector as a sub-discipline within higher education studies.

Associate Professor Jonathan Green

Associate Professor Jonathan Green is Associate Head (Research) at UniSQ College. His research and leadership focus on pathways and Enabling education, widening participation, and academic literacy. He is Editor-in-Chief of the *Journal of Pathways Education and Research* and leads a national project advancing a quality endorsement framework for Enabling education.

Dr Amara Atif

Dr Amara Atif is a Senior Lecturer at UTS, research educational technology, learning analytics, and AI in education. She designs inclusive, technology-enhanced learning environments and support interventions, embedding Indigenous knowledge and cross-cultural perspectives into curriculum. Recognised for innovative teaching with multiple Vice Chancellor's Awards, she champions student engagement, belonging, and success.

Dr Fabiane Ramos

Dr Fabiane Ramos is a Lecturer in Pathways at the University of Southern Queensland, specialising in enabling education and equity-focused transitions into and through higher education. Her interdisciplinary research explores transformative pedagogies that support diverse learners, systemic challenges, widening participation, and academic identities. Guided by an ethic of care and relationality, she advocates for equity that extends beyond access to fostering meaningful participation and belonging.

Leandi Newth

Leandi Newth is a Program Director and Senior Learning Facilitator in Design and Creative Technology at Torrens University, specialising in online education, curriculum design and student support. With 20+ years in communication design and postgraduate qualifications in UX and Leadership, she integrates industry expertise with innovative pedagogy.

Hannah Schmith

Hannah Schmith is a Course Coordinator and Senior Learning Facilitator in Design and Creative Technology at Torrens University. With expertise in curriculum design and student engagement, she leads initiatives integrating AI and accessibility in design education, advancing equitable pathways and innovative learning practices in higher education.

Dr Takahiro Yokoyama

Takahiro Yokoyama is an Associate Lecturer (Education Specialist) in academic English and literacy for the university enabling program at UniSQ College, University of Southern Queensland. His research interests include teacher identity, native speakerism, tertiary Enabling programs, and online pedagogy.

Dr Charlie Thomson

Charlie Thomson has over two decades' worth of experience as an educator, academic, writer and musician. Charlie's current research with UniSQ, focuses on how hip-hop pedagogy can be effectively implemented in various school settings and highlighting the connections between hip-hop, relational education and Shakespeare.

Dr Rian Roux, Dr Lindsay Helwig and Associate Professor Shahab Abdulla

Dr Rian Roux, Dr Lindsay Helwig and Associate Professor Shahab Abdulla are part of a team working to establish a Welcome Academy for students from refugee backgrounds at the UniSQ. Rian leads the project and chairs the Advisory Committee, whilst Lindsay and Shahab lead the Education and Research Subcommittees respectively.

Elicia Simon

Elicia Simon currently holds the role of Academic Director, Design and Creative Technology at Torrens University. An experienced educator, leader, and fellowship recipient, she specialises in innovative curriculum design, industry-embedded learning, online course delivery and first-year engagement. She leads evidence-informed initiatives that enhance retention, progression, and equitable pathways in higher education.

Associate Professor Sarah Hattam

Associate Professor Sarah Hattam has worked in Enabling education for fifteen years, as Lecturer and Program Director at the University of South Australia. Sarah has published her research on widening participation initiatives in Higher Education in Q1 journals and has extensive experience in policy analysis. Sarah has expertise in the areas of widening participation policy, enabling curriculum, retention and engagement strategies, alternative education pathways and secondary school retention.

Dr Tanya Weiler

Dr Tanya Weiler is a Senior Lecturer at the University of South Australia. As the inaugural Program Director of the Aboriginal Pathway Program, she received multiple awards for innovative and inclusive design and leadership. Tanya's research investigates transitions into, and beyond higher education, with particular emphasis on the experience of diverse student cohorts.

Ana Larsen

Ana Larsen is an Associate Lecturer at CQUniversity working in Enabling Education and the Academic Learning Centre. She is a current PhD student investigating the factors which improve self-efficacy among former enabling students. Her research interests include transition studies and Enabling education, self-efficacy, equity and social justice discourses and wellbeing.

Craig Poole

Craig brings 25 years of experience in VET and HE within Australia and internationally, encompassing programme development and delivery, educational leadership and research. As Academic Pathways Manager at TAFE Queensland, he collaborates with universities, industry partners, and wider stakeholders to advance cross-sectoral initiatives including educational articulation agreements and inter-institutional partnerships promoting tertiary harmonisation and lifelong learning.

Dr Anup Shrestha

Dr Anup Shrestha SFHEA is a Nepal-born Australian academic with a PhD in Information Systems. His research expertise is digital transformation for businesses and societies. He received the Best Australian PhD medal in 2016 and has 18 years of tertiary education and 8 years of industry experience in IT management.

Geoff Keating

Geoff is an educator and early career historian whose research examines Colonial and Imperial history and impacts, particularly in the Pacific region with an aim to contextualise political social and economic realities within this space. He also researches and publishes around the development of human rights, with a particular emphasis on the Holocaust, Indigenous development, and Holocaust education. His PhD project centres around the role of outsiders in establishing Australian rule in Papua and New Guinea between the late 19th century until the 1930's.

Dr Dongmei Li

Dr. Dongmei Li is a Senior Lecturer in Pathways with a background in higher education internationalisation and cross-cultural learning. Mei's research interests are internationalisation of the curriculum, learner diversity, equity and inclusivity, and academic development in tertiary education. She is currently teaching Cultural Intelligence for professionals and Learning in a Digital Environment.

Lisa Moody

Lisa coordinates JCU Prep's core subject within the Pathways suite. With expertise in curriculum design and inclusive pedagogy, she develops preparatory programs across diverse delivery modes. Her work supports CALD student success through scaffolded learning, academic integrity, and culturally responsive engagement in Enabling, diploma, and short course models.

Nelson Lo

Nelson Lo (FHEA) is a doctoral candidate and sessional academic at the Sydney School of Education and Social Work, The University of Sydney. His research focuses on university pathway teachers' intention and behaviour of adopting inclusive teaching practices. Nelson's recent publication explored university pathway teachers' beliefs of inclusive education.

UniSQ Springfield

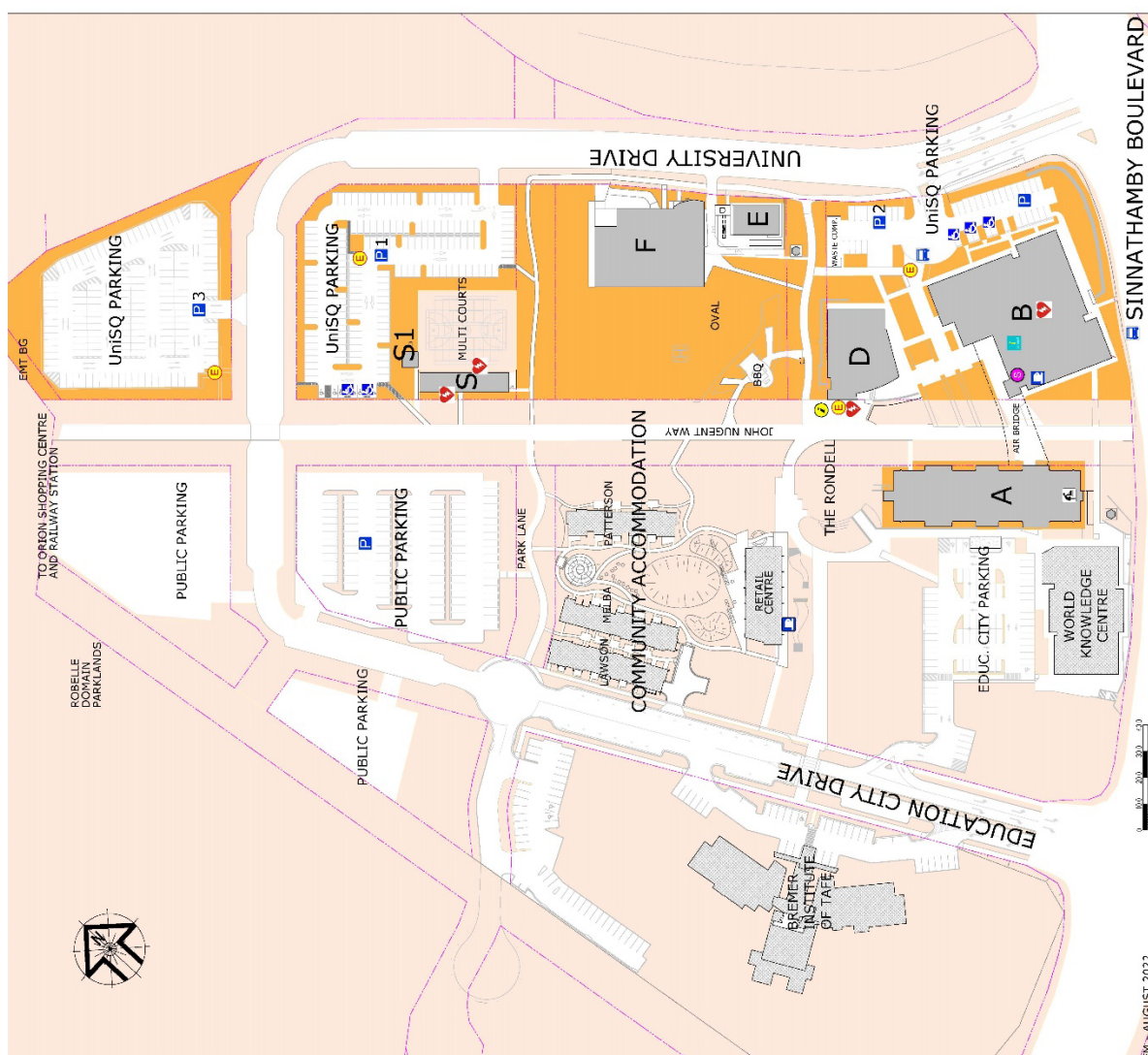
37 Sinnathamby Blvd. Springfield Central QLD 4300



SPRINGFIELD CAMPUS DIRECTORY

BUILDING ID	FUNCTION
A	LIBRARY, ICT, UniSQ COLLEGE, INTERNATIONAL, ENGAGEMENT, MARKETING, MEDIA & COMMUNICATIONS, UNIVERSITY EXECUTIVE, ACADEMIC TRANSFORMATION PORTFOLIO, COLLEGE OF FIRST NATIONS, SCHOOL OF BUSINESS, SCHOOL OF EDUCATION, SCHOOL OF HUMANITIES & COMMUNICATION
B	iconnect, CAREERS & EMPLOYABILITY, HEALTH & WELLNESS, SOCIAL JUSTICE, EQUITY & INCLUSION, PSYCHOLOGY ASSESSMENT CENTRE, SCHOOL OF CREATIVE ARTS, SCHOOL OF ENGINEERING, SCHOOL OF SURVEYING & BUILT ENVIRONMENT, SCHOOL OF MATHEMATICS, PHYSICS & COMPUTING, DIVISION OF RESEARCH AND INNOVATION, MEDIA CENTRE, STUDENT LIFE, USQ CAFE
D	AUDITORIUM, CAMPUS SAFETY & SECURITY, AVIATION - FLIGHT SIMULATOR
E	DISTRICT COOLING FACILITY
F	ENGINEERING TEACHING & RESEARCH LABORATORY, SURVEY STORE
S	FITNESS & RECREATION CENTRE
S1	STORAGE SHED

LEGEND	
	Emergency Call Points
	Information Directories
	Parking
	Bus Stop / Shelter
	Taxi
	Accessible Parking
	Defibrillator
	Ambulance Bay
	Dining Facilities
	Student Centre
	iconnect
	Parenting Room
	UniSQ Property





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