**Transitioning Inclusive Practice Online** Panel: Detailed notes of discussion

Date: 7 April

Panel Members

Staff: Assoc. Prof Jaclyn Broadbent, School of Psychology; Assoc. Prof Jan West, School of Life and Environmental Sciences; Naomi David, Early Childhood Education, NIKERI; Peter Vuong, Deakin Business School; Dr Jo Elliot, Digital Innovations, DLF; Brett McLennan, Director Learning Analytics, Office DVCE

Students: Kim Koelmeyer, 5th year BA/Law; Erica Adams, recent Bach Criminology graduate

Host

Assoc. Prof Barbie Panther, Director Teaching Capability, DLF

Questions

Q. **Barbie Panther: One for our student panellists**- **What’s been good about studying online?**

**A.** **Kim Koelmeyer**: *Liked clear objectives, instructions and support. I can drop in and drop out at regular intervals. There is a responsiveness, that when quite quick is really good.*

**Q.** **Barbie Panther:** **What would be some tips for teachers**?

1. **Erica Adams**: *Some regional students rely on regional libraries and having to travel to access internet connectivity – I needed my regional library. But that too was at times limited and use of Youtube, seminars and video caused systems to crash. Downloadable/accessible pdfs were really important.*

**Q**. **For Jan West – How has the process been for you?**

**A. Jan West.** *This has been a whole new process within a short timeframe for Tri 1. I found I needed to video all pracs to put up. We got it done and the wonderful collaboration of technical staff and demonstrators has been fantastic. There has been leadership and initiative from casual staff especially with use of photos and videos – all the valuable data students need for group assignments. We know this can’t replace the experience of a wet lab. Instead we focussed on data analysis skills. Students could access demonstrators via a drop in Zoom* session or via the discussion forums. Student poll said the shift result was excellent

**Q**. **Barbie Panther:** **How do you sensitively get students to share something about their background? This includes managing students’ privacy.**

A**. Naomi David:** *We need to think about how to sensitively get students to share about themselves. In the Bachelor of Education Early Years the cohort includes, for example, English as an Additional Language, students from various school experiences including those who do not like online learning, Australian Indigenous students. I always start with a story of my own ‘I can remember…’ This story could include thinking, feeling and doing elements. My own migration story is a good example. Students get a glimpse of you. You can say ‘Do you remember feeling….’ This can lead to a ‘feeling’ conversation or a mind-mapping activity.*

1. **Jo Elliot**: *I love Naomi’s techniques. It is really effective to try to get to know students. Assume students might be new to this. You could try to engage students with discussion questions about future degrees. For example, What work can lawyers do? Perhaps create podcasts on this topic. This helps students see what a potential career might look like.*
2. **Brett McLennan:** *Yes, sometimes connection means preparing to be a little vulnerable online. Ice-breakers enable students to have conversation with other students. We need to help students to identify what might be over-sharing too, while maintaining their own identities.*
3. **Erica Adams**: *All ideas so far are excellent, making everyone relatable, vulnerability helps with online barriers – so you can disclose safely. Icebreakers need to be mindful – don’t say ‘Tell us about yourself’ – it’s too hard for many students – being put on the spot. Be specific with a question students can answer.*

**Q. Barbie Panther: Students will want spaces for talking after class, out of office hours, and accessible resources. Peter – In what ways are you making your online learning activities and resources engaging, and how do you know you’re succeeding? And what are the most common inaccessibility issues with online learning?**

1. **Peter Vuong:** *We have 1400 students in first year accounting and we always had the Cloud Campus cohort, so we know we have to keep expectations and instructions simple and clear. For example, we use a one-click approach in our design to find resources easily. Our communications with students are now more frequent and consistent on email, video, messaging, discussion forums; and importantly asking ‘How are you going?’ We make sure we offer resources in addition to reading – videos, polling, other useful media such as H5P content, accessible textbooks and gamification. We show our faces too for connection.*

**A Kim Koelmeyer:** *Accessibility is always going to be challenging but having a really friendly interface is good. Design for easy access to lectures, and name them Week 4 or Week 6 rather than lecture 6 or 5 etc. Regular contact is needed. I really appreciated one lecturer who reached out to me as I was quiet in the online seminar. I was fine, I like to be quiet, but it meant I knew the teachers were watching.*

1. **Jo Elliot:** *A mix of learning activities is important – lots of videos is going to be hard on bandwidth. Transcripts are very important and not just for visually impaired students. Use audio recordings as well. Students can listen while doing something else like exercising. Lots of little check-ins are good, such as ‘What was interesting? What was new? What was right about it?’ Give directional feedback on where to find information. Some students want to lurk and we need to be ok with that.*
2. **Brett McLennan:** *We can look at the evidence of how students are accessing the resources. We need to design for different contexts for different times and cohorts. We know that 20 minute videos make it hard for students to find specific points so transcripts are really necessary. We need to think about video for the visually impaired – is someone talking about what is happening in the video (beyond dialogue)? Story-telling is a craft and sticking to a real context helps the story.*

**Q. Barbie Panther: Erica – can we make group work fair and equitable?**

1. **Erica Adams*:*** *Putting grades on individual elements of the task rather than one mark for the group helps. Sometimes group tasks can be disheartening for students if communication is poor by some members of the group, or there are free-loaders. Often a teacher’s response is to ‘just do your best’ to manage it. If it’s organised well in advance with clarity around who is doing what, that helps.*
2. **Naomi David:** *Everyone dislikes group work. Adults hate it, and students looking for a good WAM. Students need to be convinced that working in groups is justified by what their future employment will be like. We need to ask ourselves how can the Cloud support the group task? What formative development can we offer? The summative assessment about working in a group should be an individual mark and could be a reflective piece on the group work element.*
3. **Jo Elliot:** *It’s important to differentiate between group work and team work. Teamwork is workplace related so use team rather than the work ‘group’. Like our other panellists have said, summative assessment should be individually-based.*
4. **Peter Vuong:** *Teamwork is about a sum of different parts and collaborative in nature. Clear communication with students is very important.*
5. **Jaclyn Broadbent:** *Students have preferences in how they learn (some like to lurk) and it’s good to work hard to provide safe learning environments for making students comfortable. Smaller group organisation is good for shy students. Multiple avenues for discussion (e.g., live chat, discussion forums, Facebook group – all provide good social engagement). Intelligent agents to detect who has been missing and then sending a message to say ‘Just want to see how you are going’.*
6. **Erica Adams:** *I don’t like to be talking but I can discuss on discussion forums. In BB Collaborate I feel pressure for live talking. But when I don’t ask questions live I lose an opportunity to learn and the meaning of content is lost to me. So lurking sometimes doesn’t work.*

**Q. Barbie Panther: Jan, What is a good way to encourage students to interact in discussions, and is this important?**

1. **Jan West:** *How to help students who don’t like to be called out? Use discussion forums and then summarise major points. Some students will read forum discussions and start their own discussion groups. Some will email to get clarity. Students relate to demonstrators better than they do with lecturers. Our demonstrators have been making FAQ videos.*
2. **Kim Koelmeyer:** *I am a lurker myself. I do use FAQs. Students don’t all have/need the same level of engagement, but you can still get the information you need.*
3. **Brett McLennan:** *There is valuable content in discussion forums. You can pin those at the top of the forum.*

**Barbie Panther: Steve Morgan, could you give us your perspective as Service Coordinator of the Disability Resource Centre on the kinds of particular challenges students are facing at this time?**

1. **Steve Morgan (DSA – Access and inclusion)** *We have a range of students who experience isolation and changes to their circumstances (before Covid 19), especially those with mental health and physical disability, and they are getting in touch now with issues. Strategies from lecturers: patience, flexibility, understanding – we have also dropped the need for documentation for requests for extensions. This is a great time for us all to see what can be done to improve inclusion. Prior to Covid 19 – stress is everyday life for those with disabilities. But it’s important not to make assumptions. For example, you could think being able to do an exam at home will help an anxious student. But this might be an assumption. At home might mean being supported less with little support online. The new routine itself could create anxiety. So we need to not make assumptions.*
2. **Nicole Downes (DSA – Access and inclusion, reading a statement from a student)** *‘You and your department make it possible for us to study. Without the showers/library/study areas I’d have to defer. Free parking is extremely good. Online is hard but I accept there has to be a balance. Forum participation is hard. I’d like to submit an extra piece of writing instead’. (This is a student scoring HDs who is currently homeless.)*

**Barbie Panther: Jaclyn, What are your perspectives on effective, inclusive approaches to assessing online?**

1. **Jaclyn Broadbent:** *When I think of online assessment and inclusiveness I think of a unit I’ve taught in which I provide multiple avenues for students’ assessments – 3 pieces of assessment that are scaffolded with feedback after each piece. Students have choices and work on one piece for the trimester. There are written and video components and we give video feedback to students on how to improve. We provide exemplars and discuss the rubric and link all of this to real life. The more pathways we offer, the greater the inclusion.*
2. **Erica Adams:** *When I think about inclusive online assessment I’d make sure each component is thoroughly explained, especially the technology. Students need to feel they can come to teachers as some students are going to be nervous about new platforms/technologies.*
3. **Brett McLennan:** *It’s important to think of the inclusive design of the online assessment from the beginning. For example, drag and drop is very challenging. There could be different modes of assessment in order to avoid any unnecessary hurdles for students.*

**Q. Barbie Panther: How do we encourage our peers to communicate more with students? And what about pragmatic students?**

1. **Peter Vuong:** *It’s hard as we are all challenged by WAMs. But sharing stories of success with colleagues is important*.
2. **Jo Elliot**: *Yes we need to recognise students have varying reasons for studying. We need to provide a base but provide choice on topics of interest for students in more detail.*
3. **Brett McLennan:** *Online learning could be a little like a Victorian-era garden. There is the promenade where people would publicly gather to be seen and to talk. Then there are the garden alcoves – more private where people did not want to be seen but rather to reflect. Learning online it is essential we give students opportunities to reflect.*