

HELTA Symposium: Scholarship of Teaching and Learning

Date: Thursday, 4 December 2025

Time: 10am – 12:30pm (AEDT)

TIME (AEDT)	PRESENTER/S	SESSION DETAILS
10:00am – 10:10am	Assoc. Prof. Alison Owens	Symposium Welcome Acknowledgement of Country and University Prayer
10:10am – 10:25am	Assoc. Prof. Colette Alexander Assoc. Prof. Melissa Cain Dr Kathleen Plastow	I'm starting to get comfortable with saying I'm an academic: Reflecting on the transition to Academia and its impact on teaching and learning. For many professional disciplines, the successful transitioning of second-career academics is critical to the quality of educational outcomes. The Model of Professional Transition (Alexander, Cain, & Plastow, 2025), conceptualises the multi-socialisation processes of individuals transitioning from or between professional and academic spheres. It identifies the types of 'code-switching' required to successfully develop distinctive knowledge and identity as an academic whilst maintaining productive connections with a first career in prior-to-university contexts. The model reflects the identity formation and re-formation work faced by second-career academics particularly concerning the dilemma of holding knowledge and identity as an expert within a professional context, with being a novice in the academic context. In this presentation we interrogate the experiences of academics who are straddling, transitioning, or have transitioned between professional and academic spheres through the analysis of reflective interviews with second-career academics in the field of teacher education. We consider the additional complexity of deconstructing teacher identity in prior-to-university contexts in developing an academic teacher identity in academia with reference to the development of andragogic content knowledge (ACK). Having established the efficacy of the Model of Professional Transition for teacher education, we consider its broader implications for other fields or disciplines. We identify issues for academics and the university in effectively supporting second-career academics with the important work of code-switching between professional identities. Finally, we will reflect on how this work is impacting on scholarship concerning assessment practices and identities. Alexander, C., Cain, M., & Plastow, K. (2025). Dilemmas in professional code-switching for teacher educators in higher education. <i>Studies in Higher Education</i> , 25 1–15. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2025.2486577
10:25am – 10:40am	Mrs Katie Wilson	From Digital Doubt to Digital Confidence: Embedding Capability-Building in First-Year ITE This presentation shares findings from a reflective SoTL project embedded within a first-year core unit in Initial Teacher Education (ITE) at ACU.

Prompted by student feedback (SELT data) and ongoing PhD research into digital readiness in teacher education, the project was designed to explore how first-year pre-service teachers perceive their own digital capabilities - and how their confidence shifts across a semester through intentional, embedded support. This included the use of diagnostic tools, scaffolded delivery, and reflective classroom practice. The project emerged from a desire to improve outcomes in my own classroom while contributing to broader conversations about capability-building in ITE.

Using a self-designed pre- and post-semester diagnostic, the project tracked student confidence across key digital skills, aligned with ACARA's Digital Capability framework. Analysis drew on two key models: the TPACK framework (Koehler & Mishra, 2009) and the Digital Capability Continuum (Cain & Coldwell-Neilson, 2020).

Although digital tools were embedded in the unit curriculum, many students began the semester at a foundational level - confident with everyday tech, but unsure how to apply those skills in academic or professional contexts. Through deliberate modelling, low-stakes practice, and consistent language use, students demonstrated measurable growth in digital confidence without any changes to the formal curriculum.

This session reflects on the impact of that approach and the broader implications for supporting capability development across the student journey. It demonstrates how respectful, scaffolded intervention can help adult learners move beyond digital doubt, and will unpack how these strategies were implemented in practice.

ACARA. (2017). Information and Communication Technology (ICT) Capability. Australiancurriculum.edu.au. <https://v8.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities/information-and-communication-technology-ict-capability>

ACARA. (2025). General capabilities. Australian Curriculum. <https://www.australiancurriculum.edu.au/f-10-curriculum/general-capabilities>

Cain, K., & Coldwell-Neilson, J. (2024). Digital fluency – a dynamic capability continuum. Australasian Journal of Educational Technology, 40(1), 42–56. <https://doi.org/10.14742/ajet.8363>

Koehler, M. J., & Mishra, P. (2009). What Is Technological Pedagogical Content Knowledge? – CITE Journal. CITE Journal. <https://citejournal.org/volume-9/issue-1-09/general/what-is-technological-pedagogical-content-knowledge>

10:40am – 10:55am

Mr Alastair Tomkins
Mr Alastair Moore

A culture by design – how Student Life supports the social environment of learning

Campus culture in a post-Covid, online learning world is different. Many of the aspects of (pre-Covid) campus life which were taken for granted are barely visible including student volunteering, student groups and in-person social activity for undergraduates. There is some overseas research which confirms the benefits of active participation in campus groups/leadership by students (Yang & Chau, 2011) whilst other research describes a reduced sense of belonging for students forced into online learning (Tang et al, 2023). Recent Australian studies described better mental health outcomes for students who belonged to multiple groups (Dingle et al, 2022). Using an approach based on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, it is possible to re-shape campus life, guided by the mantra "a culture by design, not default".

This presentation outlines the psychological science which underpins the work of ACU Student Life on campus and how events/programs are designed to meet a range of student needs. There will be general concepts presented as well as examples and specific details of how these concepts are tangibly delivered to our students. It is also a chance for academics to learn about the positive impact of student-led learning in the student faculty societies, and for bigger discussion around the topics of campus culture and student engagement using co-design thinking.

- Dingle, G., Han, R., & Carlyle, M. (2022). Loneliness, Belonging, and Mental Health in Australian University Students Pre- and Post-COVID-19. *Behaviour Change*, 39(3), 146-156. <https://doi.org/10.1017/bec.2022.6>
- Tang, C., Thyer, L., Bye, R. et al. (2023). Impact of online learning on sense of belonging among first year clinical health students during COVID-19: student and academic perspectives. *BMC Med Educ* 23, 100. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s12909-023-04061-2>
- Yang, M., & Chau, A. (2011). Social involvement and development as a response to the campus student culture. *Asia Pacific Educ. Rev.* 12, 393-402. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12564-011-9149-x>

10:55am – 11:10am Mrs Kate Lowe

Regular announcements in online education – Do communication mediums matter?

Regular communication with students is essential to support learning, particularly in online courses (Tanis, 2020). During 2023–2024, posting written weekly announcements was a strategy utilised in the first-year unit of study, NRS138 Transition into Nursing, delivered to approximately 2100 students across the six campuses of Australian Catholic University. The announcements sought to provide students with important course information such as weekly content focus, upcoming assessment tasks, and scheduled webinars. However, analytics could not be run on the weekly text announcements and discussion forum activity suggested they were often overlooked by students.

In 2025, a shift was made to short, video-based weekly announcements. Preliminary data showed a 28.8% reduction in discussion forum posts and fewer repetitive questions compared to 2024, suggesting improved uptake of key information. In the Student Evaluation of Learning and Teaching Survey (SELTS), 89.34% of 154 students agreed the video announcements were informative and helpful. This aligns with evidence supporting video-based learning for improved attention, retention, and accessibility (Truss et al., 2024; Noetel et al., 2020). However, analytics showed only 31% of students viewed the Week 1 video, with engagement declining across the ten weeks.

This presentation will share data comparing written and video announcements, including patterns of student engagement and discussion forum activity. It will also consider anecdotal feedback from staff on the clarity and usefulness of the video approach. Finally, the presentation will highlight how this innovation is informing further developments in unit design, and plans for the future to improve student engagement with weekly announcements.

Noetel, M., Griffith, S., Delaney, O., Sanders, T., Parker, P., del Pozo Cruz, B., & Lonsdale, C. (2021). Video improves learning in higher education: A systematic review. *Review of Educational Research*, 91(2), 204–236.

<https://doi.org/10.3102/0034654321990713>

Tanis, C. J. (2020). The seven principles of online learning: Feedback from faculty and alumni on its importance for teaching and learning. *Research in Learning Technology*, 28, 1–25. <https://doi.org/10.25304/rlt.v28.2319>

Truss, A., McBride, K., Porter, H., Anderson, V., Stilwell, G., Philippou, C., & Taggart, C. (2024). Learner engagement with instructor-generated video. *British Journal of Educational Technology*, 55, 2192–2211.

<https://doi.org/10.1111/bjet.13450>

11:10am – 11:25am Ms Samantha McKee
Dr Victoria Obeng

Improving submission rates in first-year units through behavioural framing and feedback design

Early engagement with assessment tasks remains a challenge for many first-year university students. In this context, this study explores how an equity-driven formative assessment influences student engagement with Assessment One, as indicated by submission rates. Formative tasks are typically low-stakes and optional, giving students little incentive to engage. To address this, a component of an engagement assessment was repurposed as an in-class task, framed as a mandatory pre-census activity worth 5 marks to scaffold Assessment One. Although the task represented 1.2% of the unit grade, students perceived the 5-mark allocation as sufficient motivation. This illustrates an incentive framing effect, where

perceived value drives behaviour once incentives exceed a threshold. This task was designed to support early alignment with expectations and promote implemental thinking in students, while allowing timely identification of learning needs. AI tools were integrated in class to assist students in exploring structural and stylistic conventions and gathering preliminary research. The task also applied a loss aversion framing, with 88% of students submitting the formative assessment to avoid forfeiting marks. In this large first-year unit, only 2% did not submit Assessment One, reflecting improved submission rates following the introduction of the redesign. No additional educator workload was required, as the task repurposed a component of a pre-existing engagement assessment. These findings suggest that incorporating an equity-informed, behaviourally framed formative assessment can support student engagement and increase submission rates during the pre-census stage in first year units.

11:25am – 11:40am

Dr Tanya Uebergang
Dr Zoltan Rusznak
Dr Douglas Jackson

Talking it through: Building understanding and reasoning with interactive oral assessments

Interactive oral assessments (IOAs) are unscripted but guided conversations between students and assessors designed to evaluate understanding, reasoning, and the ability to apply knowledge in authentic contexts (Sotiriadou et al., 2019). This project aimed to trial IOAs in a second-year pathophysiology unit (n=178) as an alternative to a traditional written assignment, with the goal of enhancing student understanding and promoting academic integrity.

The assessment comprised a written case study worksheet submission and a 20-minute oral discussion based on each student's previously submitted answers. Unlike a traditional viva voce, the IOA encouraged students to demonstrate their understanding and explain their reasoning through conversational prompts.

Development of this task involved consultation with external academics and the teaching team regarding effective prompts, objective marking criteria, and structured scaffolding. Students were provided opportunities to prepare for this task by practicing IOAs in class time, analysing exemplar videos and applying marking criteria. IOAs were conducted during the examination period with assessors providing immediate pass/fail feedback.

Staff found IOAs to be engaging and efficient, and effective in distinguishing between superficial and deep understanding. The conversational prompts supported equitable participation, helped to uphold academic integrity, and promoted metacognitive reflection. Student evaluations were largely positive for an assessment introduced for the first time (median assessment SELT score = 4.52). Some students reported anxiety, which may be mitigated through clear expectations, opportunities for practice, and transparent criteria.

Overall, IOAs offered an authentic approach and provided strong evidence of individual learning.

Sotiriadou, P., Logan, D., Daly, A., & Guest, R. (2019). The role of authentic assessment to preserve academic integrity and promote skill development and employability. *Studies in Higher Education*, 45(11), 2132–2148.

11:40am – 11:55am

Dr Adam Arian

Bridging Theory and Practice: Embedding Xero Certification into Accounting Curriculum for Enhanced Employability

In accounting education, a persistent challenge lies in bridging theoretical knowledge with the digital and practical skills required by industry. This presentation reports on the integration of Xero, a leading cloud-based accounting platform, into postgraduate and undergraduate accounting units at the Australian Catholic University. The initiative embedded industry-recognised Xero Advisor Certification into curriculum design, aligning pedagogy with authentic, work-integrated learning. Drawing on experiential learning principles (Kolb, 1984) and technology-enhanced pedagogy (Boud & Prosser, 2002), students engaged in scaffolded tasks replicating professional accounting processes. Assessments were redesigned to embed authentic workplace scenarios, enabling students to apply theoretical frameworks within a digital environment. Inclusivity was ensured through targeted workshops and digital literacy supports, addressing diverse learner needs. The outcomes were significant. Student Evaluation of Learning and Teaching (SELT) results improved beyond the faculty average, while

graduate feedback highlighted enhanced confidence and employability. Over 70% of students successfully completed the Xero certification, often citing it as a differentiator in securing internships and roles. The initiative received the 2024 Teaching and Learning Innovation Award and has since informed broader curriculum reforms. This case contributes to the Scholarship of Teaching and Learning by demonstrating how industry-integrated curriculum and technology-enhanced pedagogy can elevate student learning, employability, and institutional recognition. The model has potential for replication across disciplines seeking to align curriculum with professional practice and graduate outcomes.

Boud, D., & Prosser, M. (2002). *Appraising new technologies for learning: A framework for development*. Educational Media International, 39(3–4), 237–245.

Kolb, D. A. (1984). *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Prentice Hall.

11:55am – 12:10pm

Dr Debra Phillips

You're the Voice: Parent Teacher Interviews

Building on narrative inquiry research methodology techniques, the Inclusive Practice team proposed and developed a critical assessment task for the mandatory EDET300 that would demonstrate student knowledge of techniques for teaching students with disabilities, meet the unit's Learning Outcomes and offer the Lane 2 secured assessment style. Our previous experiences with narrative inquiry research approaches provided sufficient knowledge and practical experience to determine that an interview format would be beneficial for the pre-service teacher (PST) as an actualised rehearsal for their first parent-teacher interview. The literature and PST post practicum accounts inform us that the parent/teacher interview creates anxiety.

In the assessment task, the class tutors would take on the role of a parent and ask questions from their background knowledge and teaching practice of students with disabilities. The interviewing tutor as a parent, appraises the PST's capacity for to know their student. At a third-year level, this assessment task format is apt. Many of ACU's 3rd and 4th year Education students now work as provisional teachers within schools (government, Catholic systemic and independent).

While the implementation of the task revealed many logistical issues, the initial feedback from students in Semester 1 2025 was been uniformly positive. SELTS evidence confirmed that the PSTs believed it was a most worthwhile task. Feedback from interviewing tutors indicated that more pre-planning around time constraints, scheduling and student extension requests required more planning. The 'interview' was an opportunity for tutors to engage in 1:1 teacher: student learning, a rare experience in tertiary education.

The Semester 2 EDET300 AT2 informal first-hand student vignette feedback, was that the interview style was a most productive and rewarding experience.

Betts, J. (2021). How I learned to stop worrying and love parent–teacher interviews. AEU News. Retrieved from <https://www.aeuvic.asn.au/professional-voice-1314>

Billett, P. (2019). Teacher bullying taking a toll. La Trobe University News. Retrieved from <https://www.latrobe.edu.au/news/articles/2019/opinion/teacher-bullying-taking-a-toll>

Billett, Paulina; Fogelgarn, Rochelle; Burns, Edgar (2020). Teacher Targeted Bullying and Harassment by Students and Parents: Report from an Australian Exploratory Survey. La Trobe. Report. <https://doi.org/10.26181/12655880.v2>

12:10am – 12:30pm

Discussion and Symposium Close