

Every Voice: Creating Gender Inclusive Education through Interactive Learning

Project Summary

Project Overview

The “Every Voice” project proposed to develop a handbook and discipline-specific workshops that provide pedagogical research and strategies for creating gender-inclusive learning environments. The purpose of the project was twofold: to educate ANU teachers on the ways in which learning environments influence the experience, motivation, identity, and performance of female or gender diverse students; and to equip ANU teachers with positive teaching strategies and practical activities for creating learning environments that incorporate and uplift female and gender diverse students. The project was informed by an intersectional, feminist pedagogical lens and with the intent of illuminating the way in which gender interrelates with ethnicity, culture, ability, sexuality, class, and language.

The project team successfully delivered six workshops over the course of 2020 and produced a handbook (submitted in conjunction with this report) which will be disseminated to the Colleges in January 2021. The following report will summarise the details of each workshop delivery, the evaluations data obtained, a summary of funding expenditure, and a discussion of the impact of the project and its legacy.

Variations

Prior to summarising and discussing the project delivery, it should be noted that there were significant variations to the project design due to the events of 2020.

The implementation of the project was greatly affected by the pandemic. Academic staff were unavailable to support or attend workshops not directly related to the transition to remote teaching. The lead researcher was reassigned by CLT to support the ANU’s transition to remote teaching, and the project was effectively put on hold for the first six months of 2020. The workshops had to be delivered online and College leaders (excepting CECS) indicated their preference to host workshops after second semester marking had been completed. This resulted in a number of key changes to the use of grant funds, with permission sought and granted by Dr Fiona Jenkins on behalf of the ANU Gender Institute. Due to the entirely remote nature of the project, catering and printing were no longer required. Online delivery requires greater planning and coordination, so more funds were dedicated to the employ of College Liaisons. The delayed timeline undermined the team’s capacity to evaluate the workshops impact over time, as most staff have not yet had the time to implement their learning in their teaching. There have also been comments from each College that staff are suffering from “survey” fatigue after a tumultuous year, and we did not have a high percentage of participants responding to the pre and post workshop surveys. It should also be noted that we were unable to deliver a workshop for the College of Business and Economics. While CBE

expressed interest in the project at the beginning of 2020, we were unable to obtain a response from College representatives regarding an online workshop or the employment of a College Liaison. After discussions with the COS/CHM ADE (Dr Anna Cowan) and the Education Directors, it was apparent that the resourcing that would have been applied to a CBE workshop could be used in aid of a more targeted workshop for each College. While a single educational unit, the needs and context of COS and CHM are distinct and were ultimately better addressed in two separate workshops.

College of Engineering and Computer Science

The CECS workshop was delivered synchronously via Zoom and Microsoft Teams on 13 July and was attended by over 70 teaching and professional staff members. Registrations were made through Eventbrite, with 90 people registering their interest. The workshop formed the first-half of an intensive day dedicated to diversity, equity, and the student experience. An asynchronous, self-paced version (using Articulate) was also offered and completed by a further 10 staff members (principally tutors who were encouraged to complete it by convenors who attended the synchronous workshop).

Ellen Lynch and Sophie Burgess were engaged as College Liaisons for this workshop and contributed to the selection and framing of the topics discussed. They were also pivotal in anchoring the theory and the teaching strategies in the context and needs of the College, evinced in their work for the handbook. A number of key academic staff informed the design of the workshop, in particular Associate Professor Katherine Daniell who, in her capacity as Associate Dean of Education, requested the all-day event and coordinated the College-wide engagement.

In brief, the topics explored included: cultivating social belonging and mediating belonging uncertainty, inclusive language, identifying and addressing hostile and benevolent sexism, addressing discrimination and bias, and course design for diverse needs. The spirit of this workshop, as with all the workshops in this project, was to provide space for staff to co-construct knowledge and share insights. A series of videos and interviews about CECS staff were developed in anticipation of the event, detailing the specific techniques they use to make students feel included. Each topic in the workshop was then supported by activities in which staff worked in small groups to brainstorm ideas in breakout rooms and on Padlet, Poll Everywhere, and Menti. A more substantial task involved working in groups (who were arranged in consultation with Dr Daniell to be diverse in terms of discipline area, stage of career, and gender) to create course design and teaching strategies that targeted a specific student persona. Each group were allocated a different student persona, and the resulting ideas varied widely, illustrating how students can be privileged or disadvantaged by lack of diversity in teaching approaches, class structure, and assessment design. Evidence from the Microsoft Teams channel created for the workshop indicates that many staff made new acquaintances and at least two groups resolved to keep meeting and sharing their ideas after the workshop. The suite of resources developed for the day can be accessed via [this Wattle site](#) - contact kelly.frame@anu.edu.au for access.

ANU College of Law

The ANU COL workshop was delivered via Zoom on 20 October and was attended by 17 staff members. Registrations were organised through a College-wide calendar invite delivered by Professor Imogen Saunders. Dr Jessica Hambly was originally engaged as a College Liaison, but for HR reasons was not formally employed in this capacity and completed her work as part of her “service” duties in the College. Dr Cassandra Steel also volunteered to play a key role in the design, organisation, and facilitation of the workshop. Professor Imogen Saunders dedicated her time, insights, and scheduling powers to support the event. The approach taken in this workshop was to centre COL teaching staff as the facilitators and to adopt a “working group” model. After an initial spiel on the interrelationship between social belonging and gender in law school and the legal industry, the attendees were assigned to four breakout rooms. These four groups were tasked with developing ideas and strategies to share with their peers in the College on specific topics, which were selected based on the recommendations from COL staff. These included supporting verbal contributions in class, inclusive curriculum design, inclusive assessment, and supporting students in remote learning environments. The facilitators for each discussion group were Dr Ntina Tzouvala, Dr Jessica Hambly, Dr Dilan Thampapillai, Dr Cassandra Steel, and Professor Margaret Thornton. It was particularly valuable to have Professor Thornton’s involvement in the workshop, due to her extensive work in inclusive curriculum and the wealth of resources she was able to present and offer to her colleagues in the College.

College of Science/College of Health and Medicine (COS focus)

The COS workshop was delivered via Zoom on 24 November and was attended by 23 staff members. Registrations were organised through Eventbrite, with 30 staff registering their interest. The workshop was open to staff from CHM and was designed to ensure that staff were not engaged in activities irrelevant to their teaching (for example, MSI staff would not find “inclusive lab environments” entirely relevant). Yossi Bokor was engaged as a College Liaison for this workshop and had high-level contribution to the topic selection, workshop structure, and the development of key resources. Topics included cultivating social belonging, establishing inclusive learning spaces, managing student group-work dynamics, empowering students to participate actively, and responding to bias and discrimination. Participants co-constructed teaching strategies through Menti, Padlet, and in breakout room discussions. Video scenarios were produced by Yossi as stimulus for these discussions.

College of Science/College of Health and Medicine (CHM focus)

The CHM workshop was delivered via Zoom on 3 December and was attended by 29 staff members. Registrations were organised through Eventbrite, with 40 staff registering their interest. Niamh Campbell was engaged as the College Liaison for this workshop and produced key contextual summaries detailing the challenges, initiatives, and demographics of COS and CHM. Niamh also contributed high level input into the workshop structure, resources development, and facilitation. Dr Ekavi Georgousopoulou volunteered as part of the facilitation team, providing considerable insight into the challenges and opportunities in the CHM space.

Topics included cultivating social belonging, establishing inclusive learning spaces, managing student group-work dynamics, inclusive curriculum, responding to bias and discrimination, and how to teach about the body and medicine in a gender-sensitive way. Attendees were assigned to one of three topics based on their discipline background (including students, addressing challenging student behaviours, and teaching about the body). Participants co-constructed teaching strategies through Menti, Padlet, and in breakout room discussions. Video scenarios were produced by Yossi and Will Scates Frances as stimulus for these discussions.

College of Arts & Social Sciences

The CASS workshop was delivered via Zoom on 9 December and was attended by 18 staff members. Registrations were organised through Eventbrite, with 40 people registering their interest. Isabel Mudford was engaged as the College Liaison for CASS and oversaw the development of the workshop topics, structure, and accompanying resources. The topics selected for the workshop were informed by Isabel's discussions with the gender experts among CASS staff, with particular indebtedness to Dr Fiona Jenkins, Professor Celia Roberts and Dr Katrine Beauregard.

Topics in this workshop included: cultivating social belonging, the concept of gender and how it is "performed" in the classroom, course design for inclusion, and responding to discrimination and bias. Activities involved co-constructing ideas and strategies in Padlet and Menti, as well as a more in-depth small group problem-based activity. The latter included the development of 10 different video scenarios exploring issues such as student caring responsibilities, managing student group dynamics, mental health disclosures, inclusive curriculum, accessing ANU services, pronouns, teaching sensitive topics, and managing "political correctness" and academic freedom. The small groups (which had been sent into breakout rooms) engaged with two scenarios and developed teaching strategies in response to the issues presented.

College of Asia & the Pacific

The CAP workshop was delivered via Zoom on 10 December and was attended by 12 staff members. Registrations were organised through Eventbrite, with 14 people registering their interest. Glynnis-Anne Buckley (Anna) and Tevvi Bullock were engaged as College Liaisons for this workshop, and Tevvi contributed to the chapter summaries for CAP and COL in the handbook. Anna performed considerable investigations into the issues that concerned CAP staff and these informed the topics explored during the workshop. The insights of Dr Carolyn Hendricks, Alison Cumming-Thom, Dr Amy King, Dr Kirsten Ainley, Dr Bina D'Costa and Dr Sharon Bessell were of particular salience to the project.

Topics included cultivating social belonging, supporting students with complex home lives and caring responsibilities, inclusive curriculum and syllabi, addressing discrimination and bias, and managing mental health disclosures. These were explored through video scenarios and corresponding breakout-room discussions. In addition to these activities, Victoria Firth-Smith,

whose wealth of experience with the ANU ally network, delivered a presentation on including LGBTQI+ students in the ANU context.

Evaluation

College of Engineering and Computer Science

Ethics approval was sought and obtained for surveying CECS participants, and the surveys were conducted by Evaluations Officers Karl Gwynn and Ushini Attanayake from CLT. The following summary was developed by Karl and Ushini in relation to the gender-inclusive sessions from the intensive:

When asked: “Has the CECS Teaching and Learning Intensive changed the way you think about diversity in your college/cohort? If yes, in what ways has your thinking been changed?”, respondents largely answered in agreeance. More general comments identified “having people of various backgrounds, gender[s] and experiences.” and “supporting and encouraging the diversity that we have, and ensuring that this is visible to everyone, including the students.”. The theme of visibility in the two comments above aligns with the Intensive program and shows teachers identifying diversity issues in CECS. More specific comments included, “working on diverse resources”, and “increasing the broader appeal of engineering to students”. One participant recommended “simulations of non-inclusive behaviours and how convenors can practice improving their responses/behaviours on a personal level and with others” when prompted to reflect on how their thinking had changed. The suggestion of additional training demonstrates participant consideration of how diversity/inclusivity can be actioned through teacher involvement. This is a positive outcome for the Intensive which seeks to instil constructive engagement with diversity and engagement beyond the scope of the program. To determine whether the program more broadly contributed to understandings of diversity, inclusivity, and remote engagement issues, a more representative dataset of attitudes before and after the program would be required to provide any empirical conclusions. At an observational level, participants had generally appropriate understandings of diversity, inclusivity, and remote engagement before undertaking the Intensive. Responses to the post-Intensive survey and reflections during the program indicated greater nuance of understanding, and actionable suggestions of how to approach these issues.

College of Health & Medicine/College of Science

There were 10 participants from COS and CHM who responded to the survey, 9 of whom reported that the workshop had inspired them to try something new in their teaching. Common themes in these survey responses include the commitment to communicating explicit expectations about inclusivity in the classroom space, sharing one’s own pronouns in the hope of signalling readiness to respect others’ pronouns, using structured activities to promote positive and collaborative interactions among students, encouraging students to identify with their study by referring to them as scholars/physicists/mathematicians, and promoting the skills and research outputs of tutoring staff.

College of Asia & the Pacific

There were 3 participants from CAP who completed the survey, all of whom reported that they were inspired to try new strategies in their teaching. Common themes from these responses included the importance of reviewing the syllabus and considering how the materials in the course engage with gender on the level of authorship and subject matter. The participants also noted the importance of signalling their commitment to inclusivity through communicating expectations at the beginning of the course, and one staff member was inspired to create activities that cultivate social belonging and provide a platform for communicating any individualised needs (such as juggling caring responsibilities) with the lecturer and their peers.

College of Arts and Social S/COL

There were no responses to the post-workshop surveys from these Colleges.

Impact

Despite the paucity of data arising from the surveys delivered, there are some tangible, positive outcomes that indicate the project's influence. The most significant impact has been on the practice of attendees, who have reported their commitment to changing some aspect of their approach to teaching as a result of the workshop (as described in the previous section). In addition to the survey data, we gathered information from staff reflections in CECS. One staff member has altered an assessment task to include content on diversity and inclusivity in engineering competency, noting that assessment accords importance to a topic in students' minds.

Another outcome has been the requests by ADEs, education directors, and school leaders to run the workshops again in 2021. Professor Joe Hope has requested a Physics-specific workshop, Dr Katherine Daniell has expressed her intention to make the teaching intensive (including the diversity and equity workshop) a regular fixture in the CECS calendar, and Dr Roald Maliangkay has indicated interest in running 1-2 further workshops for CAP, with support from the CAP Dean, Professor Sharon Bell.

Other developments resulting from the project include the commitment by ADE Wayne Morgan to disseminate an analytical summary of the strategies and ideas developed in the COL workshop, and to consider how to incorporate these into curriculum policy. The work of Professor Margaret Thornton is going to be made available to all COL teaching staff, with the workshop contributing to the renewed attention to the important resources she has developed. In 2021, tutors from the College of Science will be able to complete an asynchronous, self-paced course, and the team is working on having this certified as part of the COS tutoring credentials program. There is also enthusiasm from CAP Global Programs to incorporate the ideas into pre-departure training; a proposal for this project is currently under development. Finally, the lead researcher has incorporated the research and planning from this workshop directly into the creation of two new Preparing for Tutoring and Demonstrating (PTD) modules offered by the Staff Education team in CLT. Tutors at ANU will be able to engage with these offerings for years to come.

This summary has addressed the experiences and impact on the attendees, but it should be noted that at least 60 people registered (based on Eventbrite figures) for workshops and were unable to attend. From these numbers and the over the course of the communications the team have had with countless staff across the ANU campus, it is apparent that there is enthusiasm about gender-inclusive teaching. Staff want to have these conversations, either because they feel impassioned that not enough is being done in this space, because they feel unsure about how to support all their students (but are deeply committed to doing so), or because they have wonderful ideas and want to share these with their colleagues.

Conclusion

The impact of Covid on the design and delivery of this project cannot be understated; the project team were told repeatedly by College stakeholders that staff were stressed and overworked in 2020 and their capacity to attend workshops was limited. The change in timeframes affected our capacity to evaluate and produce the various deliverables, as well as to manage these with our own affected workloads. There have nevertheless been positive outcomes provided by the pivot to remote delivery. In particular, I do not believe we would have engaged the large cohort from CECS if we were hosting face-to-face workshops. We also produced many digital resources that capture the ideas and strategies generated by attendees, and these are hosted in various College wattle sites and continue to be accessible.

The summaries of each workshop indicate the project's indebtedness to advocates and champions across the campus. The endorsement of staff members in leadership (ADEs, ADSEs, and Education Directors) made a significant difference to attendance.

Similarly, the input of College staff improved the quality of the workshop and the enthusiasm of attendees, whether that input was in the form of consultation, involvement in resource production, or through facilitation. The College Liaisons played a key role in engaging these staff members; this work, along with the vital tasks of contextualising teaching strategies and concepts in the various College spaces, were critical to making the workshops relevant to attendees.

The volunteering of time and expertise by so many staff members, as well as the participation of over 200 staff members in the workshops overall, speaks to the character of the ANU community during times of hardship. Staff care about their students, they care about equity and inclusion, and they are willing to dedicate their time and energies to uplift diverse voices in the academy and beyond. This project has connected these staff members to each other within their Colleges and across the campus. The conversations and communities the project has consolidated must continue for change to occur, and the indications from leadership involved in the project suggest that there is renewed energy and plans in place.