

WATTLE 2021 Annual Report



2021 in Review

WATTLE Profile

The Wollongong Academy for Tertiary Teaching & Learning Excellence (WATTLE) is a leadership community dedicated to providing space for teaching and learning recognition, development, passion and dialogue. WATTLE aims to create a community of practice where a diversity of expertise can be recognised and utilised to further teaching and learning locally, nationally and internationally.

Under the guidance of the then DVC(E) and LTC Director, the WATTLE Academy was established in May 2014 with an initial induction of 60 University of Wollongong (UOW) staff members, who had received recognition for excellence in teaching and learning. With the closure of the government's Office for Teaching and Learning in June 2016, the need for institutions to deeply embed an academy into their structure became critical. In August 2016, a new UOW WATTLE Executive Committee model was formed under a distributed leadership model with the objective of galvanising the Academy and reengaging with the teaching and learning community.

Since then, the Academy has grown to its current membership of over 300 Principal Fellows, Senior Fellows, Fellows and Associate Fellows committed to enhancing the learning experience of all our students. Every member of staff across all of the university's campuses nationally and internationally, whether they are teaching, research or professional; employed as casual, part-time or continuing can become a member of this Academy.

<https://www.uow.edu.au/about/learning-teaching/wattle/>

Purpose

The broad purpose of the Academy is to: Promote excellence and leadership in teaching and learning at UOW. WATTLE's key objectives are:

1. Building a higher education-focused community of expertise, scholarship and research to lead discussion, collaboration and innovation in University teaching and learning, within and outside of the UOW.
2. Building networks of knowledge fostering national and international relationships with respect to teaching and learning.
3. Increasing UOW's national and international reputation with respect to teaching and learning.

Links to UOW Strategic Plan

WATTLE aligns with the following Values of the 2020-2025 Strategic Plan: Intellectual Openness; Excellence and Dedication; Empowerment and Academic Freedom; Mutual Respect and Diversity and Recognition and Performance.

WATTLE aligns with Goal 1: Empowering Students for their future, specifically Goal 1.5 Delivering excellence.

We will support ongoing staff development through proactive communities of practice and enhance career progression opportunities for teaching academics and professional staff. This in turn supports the Strategic Enablers of People and Culture.

A Word from the Chairs

The year 2021 started with the anticipation of on campus learning blended with online, and the move for many to dual delivery. With all of the changes occurring within UOW Wattle members started the year with a chat with DVC (Education) Professor Theo Farrell. During the course of the first half of 2021 WATTLE offered numerous ‘Connect and Create’ sessions focused on topics that were important to WATTLE members and aligned to the strategic priorities of the University. During these sessions members learn from experts whilst reflecting on their own practice to create advances in their teaching.

Continuing WATTLE’s focus on equity, diversity and inclusion our mid-year forum focused on ‘Access and Inclusion – UOW for All’. Over three days colleagues within and outside UOW shared insights on the design of online learning environments that works for all student’s, learning about Blackboard Ally and gaining insights from a student panel. On the final day our ‘Connect and Create’ session focused on strategies for Universal Design for Learning (UDL). In October 2021 WATTLE hosted a LGBTQI+ Inclusion panel.

Materials from all of our events can be found at https://padlet.com/WATTLE_Academy/fw26ugjlp63fxl8g

In the second half of 2021 WATTLE launched the ‘Teaching Circles’ initiative supporting the creation of 14 circles connecting colleagues across UOW. In 2022 we look forward to hosting events showcasing their work to inform best practice at UOW. In 2021 we were also able to bring back conference funding support to allow members to present their work or participate in L&T conferences nationally and/or internationally.

2021 saw a number of new members join WATTLE, particularly from our global campuses. We welcome all new members and thank our existing members for their ongoing support.

In 2021 WATTLE members continued supporting the University’s awards and recognition processes providing mentoring for Australian Awards for University Teaching (AAUT) and Outstanding Contribution to Teaching and Learning (OCTAL) applicants, whilst providing mentoring for applicants and review for Continuing Professional Development processes.

During 2021 the WATTLE Executive said good bye to Dr Holly Tootell and Dr Jacinta McNamara long-time supporters of WATTLE and committee member since 2020. We also thank our outgoing Administration Support Officer Mrs Caroline Hudson. In 2022, the Executive are: Associate Professor Tracey Kuit (Co-Chair), Associate Professor Belinda Gibbons (Co-Chair), Dr Sue Downie, Dr Tam Ha and Dr David Porter.

In 2022 we look forward to welcoming new members to the WATTLE Executive Committee and including Students on the Committee for the first time.

WATTLE continues to be an Academy run by, and for its members. We thank the WATTLE membership for your inspirational dedication to L&T at UOW. We look forward to welcoming new members and connecting with you all in 2022. As always, we welcome your input and involvement in 2022 as we continue to strive for Excellence.



Associate Professor Tracey Kuit and Associate Professor Belinda Gibbons
Co-Chairs WATTLE Committee

2021 WATTLE Executive Committee



Dr Sue Downie



A/Prof. Belinda Gibbons (Co-Chair)



Dr Tam Ha



A/Prof. Tracey Kuit (Co-Chair)



Dr Jacinta McNamara



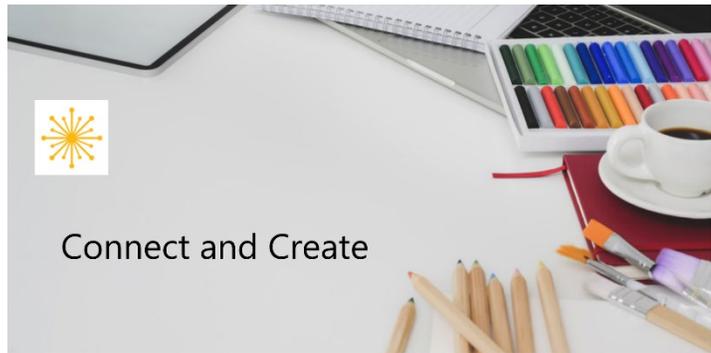
Dr David Porter

Admin support: Mrs Kim Martin and
Mrs Caroline Hudson



Connect and Create Sessions

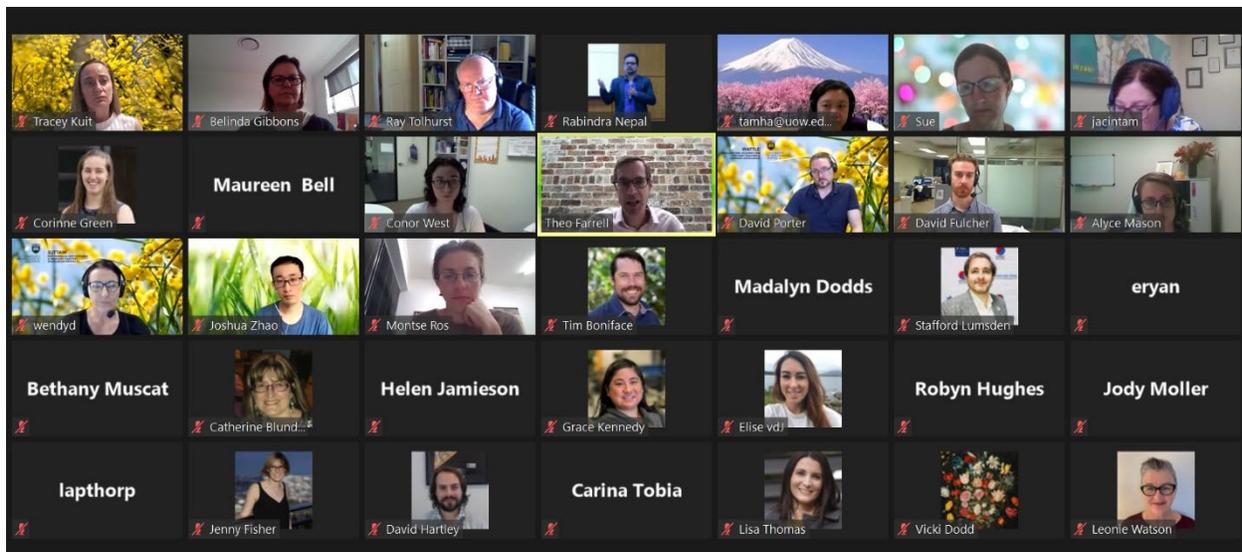
With the move to working from home during the pandemic in 2021, WATTLE ran monthly sessions to provide a place for members to share practice and meet socially. These ‘Connect and Create’ sessions were further built upon in 2021 as we explored emerging areas in learning and teaching with a focus on impact on our practice in ‘Connect and Create’ sessions. Approximately 300 WATTLE members attended sessions throughout the year.



WATTLE 2021 Launches with a Q&A with DVC(E) Prof Theo Farrell



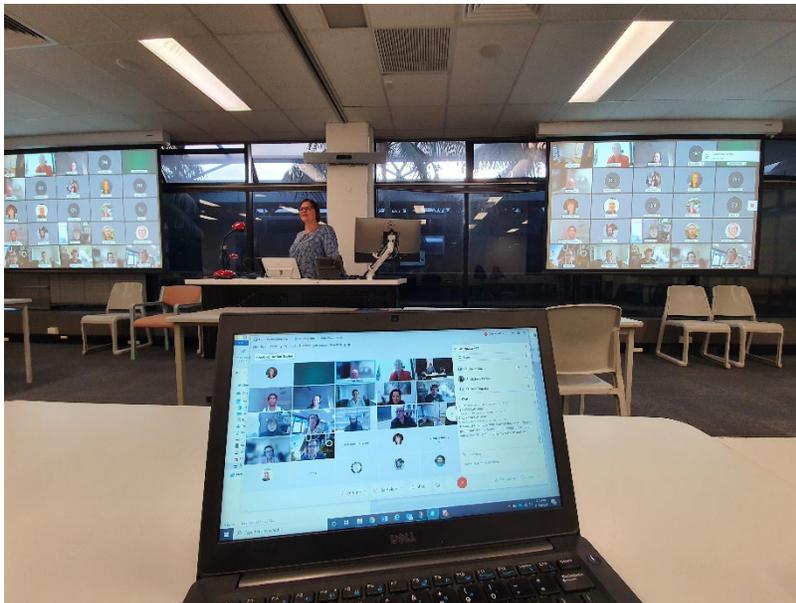
As we started 2021, we were embracing blended delivery models and building upon the lessons learnt during 2020’s pivot to remote learning. With so many changes and much uncertainty, DVC(E) Professor Theo Farrell sat down with the WATTLE community in March to address questions and share insights. Questions and discussions were broad, asking whether we would ever have a return to face-to-face lectures, how would we balance technology with andragogy in dual delivery modes, how would we provide relationship-rich education, how were we partnering with external providers for online delivery, how would we address academic integrity in online assessments, along with pondering learning spaces of the future and more.



Dual Delivery Andragogy



The year 2021 also provided the impetus and opportunities to embrace ‘Dual Delivery’ practices. However, members had questions on the pedagogy behind Dual Delivery models of teaching, as well as questions about using the technology now available on our campuses. For April’s session, Dr Belinda Gibbons and colleagues shared their experiences and insights in using this mode of teaching during Trimester 1 and Autumn sessions. This session was presented in dual delivery mode with 50 people online, including colleagues in Hong Kong and Dubai and 8 people joining within the room.

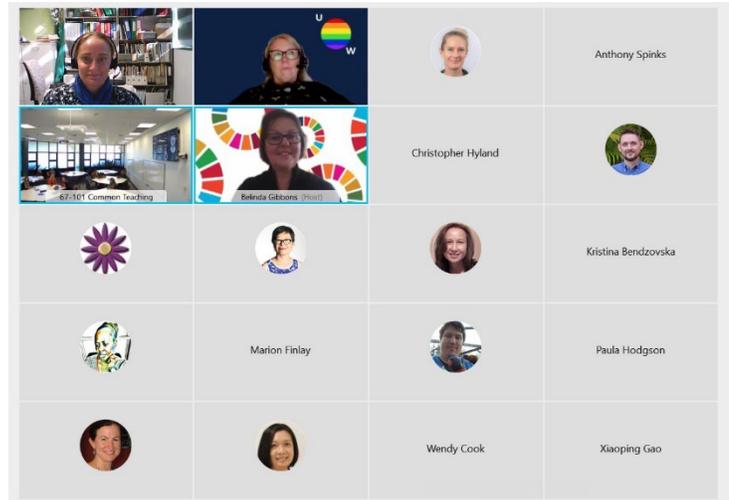


“I thought the demonstration of practice was useful in the presentation itself. For example, using a ‘student’ online to communicate with the online participants and the presenter. I also enjoyed hearing of people’s experiences using this type of delivery both good and bad.” (WATTLE survey participant).

“I found the awareness and increasing knowledge concerning the opportunities and possibilities of dual mode delivery - and appreciation of the diversity in which this can occur very helpful.” (WATTLE survey participant).

UNSDGs: A Teaching and Learning Focus

This session focused on outlining the SDGs and why we should focus on them in our teaching. We heard about the UOW SDG Subject Portfolio from Future Education and spent time aligning our subject(s) with some SDGs. Resources for curriculum design were highlighted and examples of good practice were shared by colleagues across UOW, including in Business and Nutrition. This event was also run in dual delivery mode with 15 people joining face-to-face and 29 online.



“I found the quick background on SDGs provided by Belinda Gibbons enabled my teaching team to put together and excellent short interactive lecture for our first year course. Talking to other staff about how they incorporate SDGs into their teaching was also inspiring.” (WATTLE survey participant).

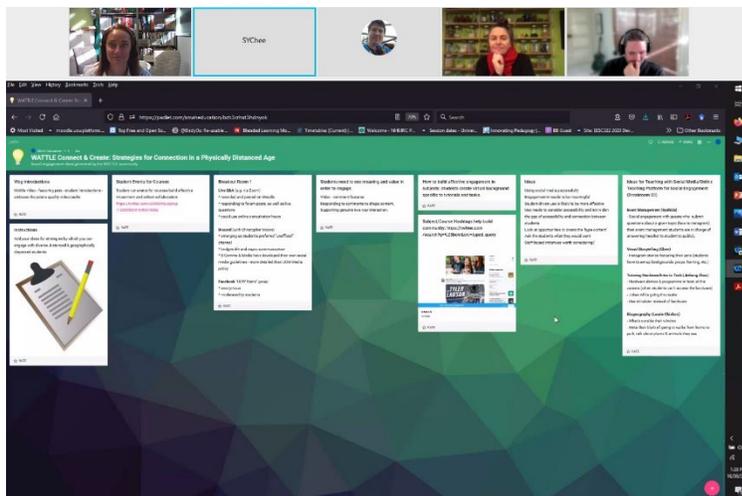
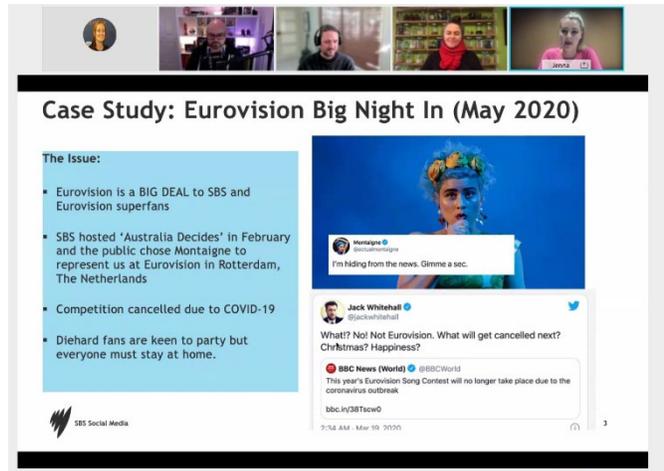
“I found the links to SDG teaching materials already in existence was very helpful A reminder that all SDG's are linked was helpful - as I now plan to stress the concept to students who believe that some goals are more important than others.” (WATTLE survey participant).



Connection in a Physically Distanced Age

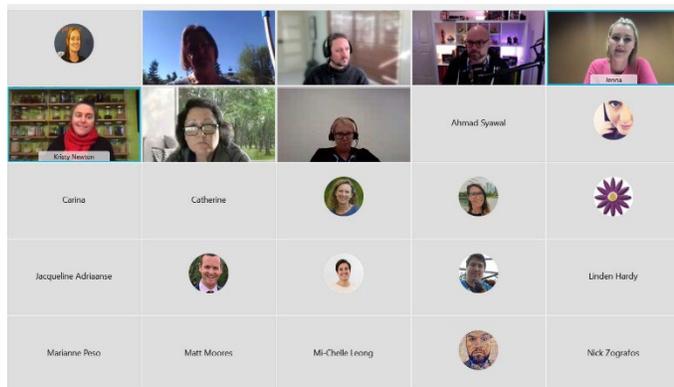


This June session was co-hosted by WATTLE with UOW's Educational Developer Network. Jenna Bradwell, UOW alumna and Social Platforms Manager at SBS, shared how the television network kept its audiences engaged during 2020 pandemic lockdowns. Following Jenna's presentation, attendees brainstormed and discussed how similar approaches may be used in higher education to engage with students. Christopher Moore, a senior lecturer in Communication and Media and Academic Program Director of Creative Industries at UOW, co-facilitated this portion of the program.



"I thought the guest was well selected and while not directly aligned with tertiary education, it didn't take much lateral thought to translate her media background into our own context, but with a fresh take on how to initiate active participation from students in a digital context, whilst also creating that sense of community that comes more naturally from face-to-face interaction (i.e. on campus)." (WATTLE survey participant).

"I really enjoyed the sharing of ideas in the breakout rooms." (WATTLE survey participant).



Managing Large Cohorts

In June, we explored strategies to streamline administrative tasks/subject management for large student cohorts. Sharing of practices across numerous disciplines within the University was a highlight of this session with a real focus on practical solutions to shared issues.

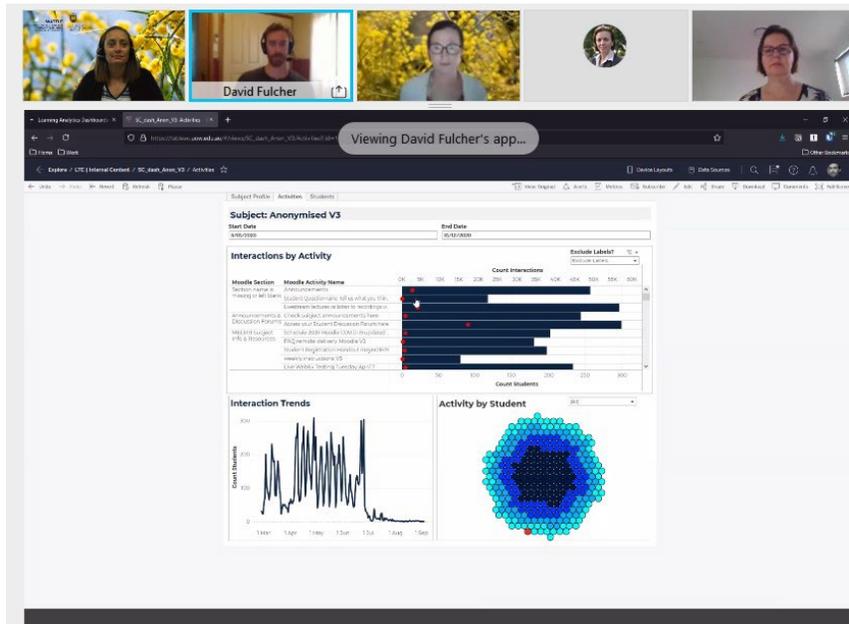


This session included mini-presentations from UOW colleagues:

- Dr Sarah Ailwood, ‘Giving effective Feedback’
- Dr Beo Thai, ‘Personalising the learning experience: an example from MARK270 services marketing’.
- Dr Sue Downie, ‘Managing emails, class lists, and RA students’
- David Fulcher (LTC Learning Analytics Team) ‘The New UOW Learning Analytics Subject Dashboard to monitor student progress and engagement’
- Dr Elias Kyriazis from BAL, Marketing, presented on ‘being present for, and supporting 1st year students on their journey. Humanising the subject, reflective student surveys.’

“I found the student well - being strategies; what we can look forward to (trial) in terms of seeing analytics of student involvement in online learning; feedback strategies very helpful.” (WATTLE survey participant).

“Useful overall and the short form presentations meant only useful stuff was discussed. Some might be useful as a more in-depth session, especially where a walk thru or hands on keyboards kind of thing could be done.” (WATTLE survey participant).



“Hi all, I just wanted to thank Sue and Tracey and the WATTLE crew, and all of the presenters for the meeting today. In just one hour I have learnt a lot of new tools and strategies for the upcoming semester. A great forum for disseminating great practice, thank you!” (Session participant)

WATTLE LGBTQI+ Inclusion Panel

Continuing with the themes of diversity and inclusion from the mid-year forum, WATTLE in conjunction with the UOW Ally Network hosted a LGBTQI+ panel. Professor and Dean of Law, Trish Mundy chaired the student panel: Levi Beckett, Jacob May, Tani Hendriks. The students shared their perspective of what it is like to be a student who is gender, sex or sexuality diverse at UOW and provide recommendations and strategies for ways that staff can be more inclusive in the educational context. Nancy Huggett of the UOW Ally Network briefly addressed attendees and provided an overview of the Network. WATTLE would also like to acknowledge the contribution of Sharon Ee Ling Quah's assistance in setting up the session.



ALLY AT UOW

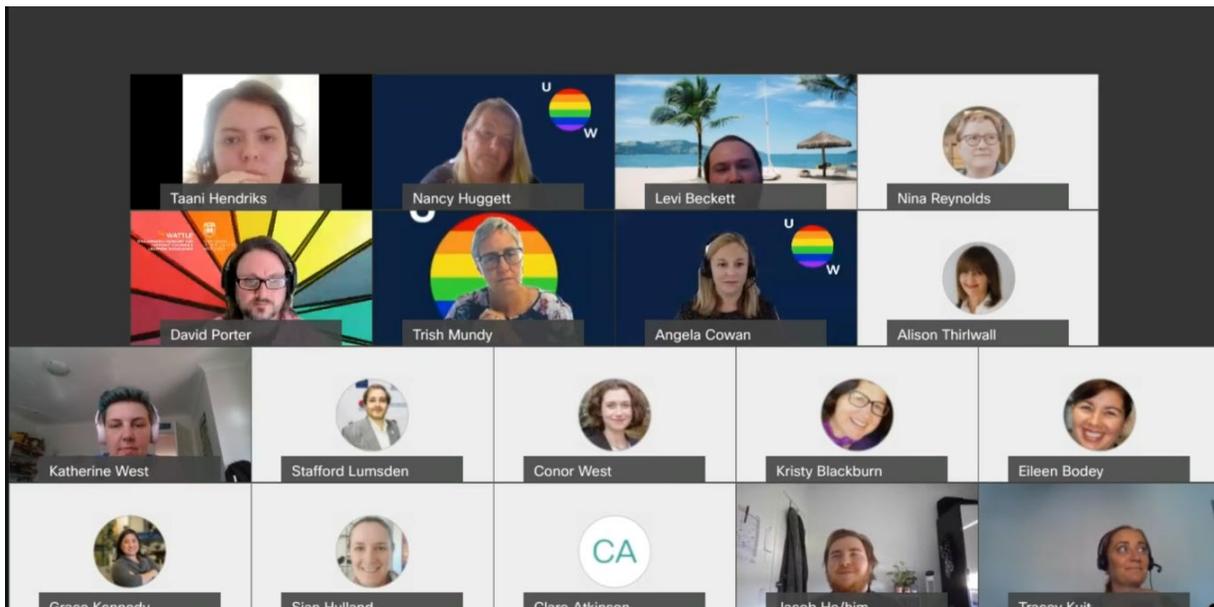
WEBSITE: Ally Network - University of Wollongong - UOW
 FACEBOOK "UOW Ally Network": <https://www.facebook.com/search/top?q=uow%20ally%20network>
 WEBEX Ally Network Group

WHAT IS THE ALLY NETWORK?
 A visible network of empathetic people who are allies of gender, sex and sexuality diverse students and staff.

WHO ARE ALLIES?
 Any UOW staff member or student can be an Ally whether or not they identify as gender, sex and sexuality diverse. There are currently over 300 staff and student allies (see list on website).

WHAT DO ALLIES DO?
 Allies have an identifying Ally sticker or poster on our door or in our workspace signalling we are a point of contact for people who are gender, sex and sexuality diverse to raise issues, ask questions and share information. Allies can connect people with appropriate resources but we won't take on roles for which we aren't trained (eg counselling). We run events, stalls at orientation and provide information to the UOW community.

HOW DO I BECOME AN ALLY?
 To become an Ally just complete an online inclusion training program developed by our partner Pride in...



WATTLE Mid-Year Forum:

Access and Inclusion – UOW for All



This year's WATTLE mid-year forum, *Access and Inclusion—UOW for All*, featured four exciting events over three days, with over 80 participants exploring how to make learning more inclusive and accessible to all learners. The three days served as inspiration to spur further discussion about how we can make learning and teaching at UOW more inclusive and accessible to all students, including understanding the context and why access and inclusion are of importance, technological tools that can help make online materials more accessible and adaptable to student needs, and strategies that can be used to make your teaching more inclusive.

Day 1: 21 July 2021 12:00-2:00pm AEST Designing Online Learning Environments That Work for All Students

Dr Erin Leif, Dr Laura Alfrey, Dr Christine Grove, & Professor Umesh Sharma, Monash University

The number of students with disabilities in higher education has continued to increase proportionately across the Western world, including Australia. However, these students are less likely to complete their studies than their non-disabled peers and, if they graduate, are less likely to engage in meaningful and competitive employment. One way to support inclusion and participation of students with disabilities is by incorporating the principles of Universal Design for Learning (UDL) into online learning design. In principle, UDL is designed to make coursework easier for everyone to access. The presenters provided recommendations for proactively designing online learning environments that meet the needs of diverse learners, including students with disabilities, using the principles of UDL in practice.

Student Panel: What Works and What Doesn't for Students

Facilitator: Jacinta McNamara

Students: Zac Arkley-Smith, Holly Capocchiano, Juliana Cavalieri Goncalves Pelоче, Adelaide Ellis, & Gayani Gunasekera

Our student panels are always a highlight. Our UOW students provided their perspectives on what access and inclusion means to them and the practices that they have found effective in supporting their learning.

The poster features a vibrant, multi-colored background with a central sunburst pattern. At the top, it says 'WATTLE FORUM' and 'Access and Inclusion: UOW for All'. Below this, it lists the dates '20, 21 & 22 July 2021' and the venue 'Online'. A 'Register now' button with a QR code is present. The 'ABOUT THE FORUM' section lists three events: '20 July 2021 12:00-2:00pm AEST: Designing Online Learning Environments that Work for All Students' with a student panel; '21 July 2021 12:00-1:00 pm AEST: Blackboard Ally: Supporting Diverse 21st Century Learners and Universal Design for Learning'; and '22 July 2021 12:00-1:00pm AEST: WATTLE Connect & Create: Teach and Tell – Strategies for UDL'. Logos for WATTLE, the University of Wollongong, and a large red 'W' are at the bottom.

Day 2: 22 July 2021 12:00-1:00pm AEST

**Blackboard Ally: Supporting Diverse 21st Century Learners and Universal Design for Learning
Mark Bailie, OpenLMS**

To support diverse learners and the aspirations of Universal Design for Learning, Blackboard Ally is a tool to help achieve these ends. This presentation highlighted the ways in which Blackboard Ally as a tool can be used to support teaching staff providing accessibility, usability and flexibility for learners.

Day 3: 23 July 2021 12:00-1:00pm AEST

WATTLE Connect & Create: Teach and Tell - Strategies for UDL

This interactive session invited participants to collaborate and share their teaching strategies for working with diverse learners and creating a more inclusive learning environment with a focus on UDL strategies. The participants generated a list of suggestions against 5 UDL criteria:

1. Identifying students' challenges
2. using digital materials and strategies
3. sharing content in a variety of ways
4. offering choice for students to demonstrate their knowledge
5. methods and scenarios for different digital tools.

We focused on principles of Universal Design for Learning and shared some current practices already used by our audience in order to collectively inspire better practices going forwards.



Teaching Circles

In the second half of 2021 we launched a new initiative called Teaching Circles under the leadership of Dr David Porter. Following a successful expression of interest process 14 teaching circles were formed with approximately 67 participants (see below). Teaching Circles could also apply for up to \$500 worth of funding. In total, approximately \$4800 and 11 mini-grants were awarded to support Teaching Circles projects. In 2022, work from these Teaching Circles will be show-cased through WATTLE-supported events.

2021 Teaching Circles

Learning Strategies & Student Engagement	Ungrading
Novel Technologies for Remote Learning & Teaching	Developing Collaborative Online Teaching Spaces for Mathematics and Statistics
Improving Learning Experiences for International Students Outside of Australia	Building Learning Communities
Blended/Online Learning	Statistics Modules for Biomedical Sciences
Alumni Engagement	Embedding WIL for International Students
Group Work and Collaboration Online	Interdisciplinary Learning: Sustainable Homes Challenge
Public Health Disciplinary Teaching Circle	Transcription of Video

Participants valued the opportunity to share with one another and to discuss issues in their teaching. They also appreciated the ability to be able to look into a topic. One participant even mentioned that it was helpful for them to become better acquainted with the institution and WATTLE as a new staff member.

Common themes through the area of improvement include the need to provide a longer period over which the teaching circles run, creating an opportunity for the groups to share more broadly with one another and greater clarity around the funding. This reflects the quick nature in which this scheme was put together and the constraints around budget expenditure and timelines.

"This gave us additional opportunities to come together and discuss teaching practices, however, what I found really beneficial was the catch up with all the other circles and hearing about what they are working on."

"It was a great opportunity to learn and get to know WATTLE and UOW teaching community as I was in my first year at UOW. The information session with members of different teaching circles was insightful. With the mini-grant that our teaching circle received, we could establish valuable initiatives."

"Managing the workload was quite difficult. It would be better to start them earlier before semester begins so that members had more time to plan and implement the tools (rather than on the fly)."

"Would have liked a final sharing session, or video summary."

Christmas Celebration

Our Christmas celebration was our last connect session for 2021 and was enjoyed by all. DVC(E) Professor Theo Farrell shared an end-of-year message and gave thanks to all members. We celebrated all of WATTLE’s achievements and acknowledged the work of our Teaching Circles, before providing a place for sharing and discussion in breakout rooms. We ran a prize for the best virtual background, with recipients being Tim Boniface, Grace Kennedy, David Hartley and Corrine Green.



WATTLE events 2021 https://padlet.com/WATTLE_Academy/fw26uqip63fxl8g



2021 Member Feedback

Attendance at WATTLE events in 2021 was challenging for many participants as everyone rallied behind blended and dual delivery modes of teaching. In 2021, we were able to connect colleagues at Wollongong, regional, metro and global campuses, with most attendees unsurprisingly still aligned with the Wollongong campus. Our members remain predominantly academics, however we see an increasing number of professional and casual sessional and fixed-term staff joining the Academy.

Throughout 2021, Academy members were asked to outline events of interest. We embraced a dual delivery model alongside a blended delivery model to ensure our events were accessible both synchronously and asynchronously. All events included some element of web conferencing, and session recordings and resources were made available via Padlet and the WATTLE website where appropriate.

During our end of year survey, the participants reflected on what they enjoyed and how they would improve WATTLE.

'Keep up the great work - this is a crucial part of strengthening the ties between academic teaching and academic management!'

'I enjoyed the time given to small group sharing and conversation. It was hard this year being at home but the drop-in sessions and casual catchups did break up the day and sparked some ideas and food for thought.'

'As a teaching intensive fixed term academic with a heavy governance load and trying to progress some research, I just felt so time poor and was often not free to attend...and when I was...I could not face more online time.'

'I would like to see greater opportunities to make WATTLE more welcoming and inclusive for professional staff/staff who support quality learning & teaching as valuable members towards high quality of learning & teaching at UOW.'

'Thank you again for another great year of WATTLE fellowship. It's a bit of a sanctuary for flicking the brain over to reflection rather than reaction!'

'Workloads are really high, it would be good to get some kind of official release to have time to be more active with teaching circles.'

During our end of year survey, when asked what topics were most of interest, 24 respondents answered:

Topic	No. of respondents	Topic	No. of respondents
Scholarship of Teaching and Learning (SoTL) workshops	16	Blended learning	9
Benchmarking and sharing best practice	12	Learning analytics	8
Work-integrated learning	11	Staff wellbeing	7
Student partnerships	11	Student career preparedness and employability	7
Joining a UOW Community of Practice	10	Student wellbeing	7
Lifelong learning	10	Global Curriculum innovation	6
Microcredentials	10	Other (please specify)	3

In response to this survey, in 2022 WATTLE will look to partner with LTC and academics across UOW to run a workshop series on SoTL. WATTLE will continue to share practice through focused events and through events of interest to its members, see “How to get involved” below.

How to get involved

WATTLE is an academy run by its members and relies on their involvement. There are numerous ways members can get involved including responding to annual surveys, emailing the WATTLE Executive (academy-wattle@uow.edu.au) and suggesting future events <https://www.uow.edu.au/about/learning-teaching/wattle/event-criteria/>.

To become a member go to <https://www.uow.edu.au/about/learning-teaching/wattle/membership/>

APPENDIX ONE: Summary of WATTLE Supported Events in 2021

<https://www.uow.edu.au/about/learning-teaching/wattle/past-events/>

MONTH	EVENT
March	WATTLE Connect and Create with Theo
April	WATTLE Connect and Create Dual Delivery Andragogy
May	WATTLE Connect and Create UNSDGs a Learning and Teaching Focus
June	WATTLE Connect and Create Connection in a Physically Distanced Age WATTLE Connect and Create Managing Large Cohorts
July	<p>WATTLE Mid-Year Forum: Access and Inclusion - UOW for All Three day event</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Designing Online Learning Environments That Work for All Students. Erin Leif, Christine Grové, Laura Alfrey & Umesh Sharma, Monash University • Student Panel: What Works and What Doesn't for Students. Facilitator: Jacinta McNamara, Students: Zac Arkley-Smith, Holly Capocchiano, Juliana Cavalieri Goncalves Peloché, Adelaide Ellis, & Gayani Gunasekera • Blackboard Ally: Supporting Diverse 21st Century Learners and Universal Design for Learning. Mark Bailye, OpenLMS • WATTLE Connect & Create: Teach and Tell - Strategies for UDL. Tam Ha and David Porter
August	Launch of Teaching Circles with Q&A Session
October	Teaching Circle mid-point sharing session
October	Connect and Create LGBTQI+ Inclusion Panel
December	WATTLE Christmas Connect and Celebrate