Hi I’m Darlene McLennan, the Manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training (ADCET). This podcast – The Three Essentials in the move online is the audio taken from a webinar presented by ADCET on the 1st of April. Listeners need to be aware that the presenters at times may talk about a particular slide. If you would like to view the slides you can visit [www.adcet.edu.au](http://www.adcet.edu.au). With the need for more universities to quickly convert face to face learning to online, this webinar presented by Cathy Stone and Nicole Crawford focuses on three essentials for moving your learning online. It also promotes the national guidelines for improving outcomes in online learning developed by Cathy in 2016 as a part of her fellowship with the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education (NCSEHE). Our two presenters have come to us with a wealth of experience and knowledge from the sector. Dr Cathy Stone is an independent consultant and researcher I the field of Post-Secondary Education and Dr Nicole Crawford is a current Equity fellow for the National Centre for Student Equity in Higher Education. We hope you enjoy this webinar and now let’s hear from Cathy and Nicole.

Hello everybody. It's a really odd experience to know there are now 340 of you out there and here am I, talking into a little camera. But anyway, it's great to know you're there, even if I can't see you all and I hope you find today interesting and useful. What we're going to do today is we are going to be talking about three essentials of moving online. Now, in order to get to those three essentials, I need to give you background and context based on research findings. So, it's important that we go through that background and context first and I hope to do that fairly quickly so we can get to the three essentials and have a chat about that.

There were a number of questions raised in the registrations and we hope this presentation, Nicole and I will be able to cover most of those questions in a general sense at least, but if there's anything specific that hasn't been covered, please feel free to ask them again and I know there'll be other questions happening during the session.

What do we know about online students? This is how they've traditionally been more likely to be, but now we're talking about all students. It's going to be very different this year, but traditionally, online students have tended to be older, more women than men, first in their families amongst their friends to go to university. Working part-time or full-time. Very often studying part-time and very time poor because of their multiple other commitments with home, work and family. Often, financial issues, unable to travel the distance to study on campus, but many online students have been living close to campuses. Obviously, not so much those in regional and remote areas, but in metropolitan areas, that's certainly the case. There's been other issues that have resulted in them choosing online study. Usually, the nature of their other commitments and the fact they're very time poor. That's changing, because now we're potentially talking about all students.

It's really important we think about, what do we know about what online students want? It's very different studying online, so I'm going to talk you through key findings from some pieces of research conducted between 2015 and 2019 about the online student experience and these are some key points about what online students say they want and need.

They want to feel included and valued and unfortunately, they don't always feel that way. These are quotes from students from various studies. Often, they feel they're a lower priority, second fiddle, not really having a voice. They want to feel prepared and often they feel uni doesn't give them that hook to start. As one student said, you kind of drowned. We need inductions and orientations on how to use stuff. Probably above all, they want to be responded to and students use words like self-service units, disappearing lecturer, little or no feedback, no discussion, ‘don't bother me’ tutors, which is not great. But also, they very much want and need flexibility and they say things like, the whole point of being online I would have thought for is flexibility, to encompass a broader range of learners in different circumstances. It's marketed as being flexible, so they do expect that.

They want that connection; they want connection with people. They always appreciate when teachers and other staff connect with them. They want the personal contact. They talk about, it's nice to hear another human being's voice and think, how did you know today was the day I really needed someone to check in? I’ll talk about that a little bit later. They want proactive institutional support that reaches out to them and gives it to them where they are. An example is being asked or told that they all need to redo their referencing for the next assessment which is another essay. They gave us no tutorial or anything. Presumably, tutorial support was available to them, but unless it's actually made explicit within their course content, they often don't have the time to go looking for it, or they don't know where to look. So, it just needs to be very clearly offered to them within their course content. And they want well-designed materials. They know themselves what works in person is not the same as online, so putting up audio recordings of hour-long lectures, things like that, they expect it to be more tailor-made for it than what it is, because that can be a very disengaging experience when lectures are just put up online or PDFs they're meant to scroll through. We'll come back to that as well when we talk about the three essentials.

My equity fellowship research, I wanted to hear from those who teach and support online students. I'd heard a lot in other research about what students want. I wanted to look at what was happening out there in higher education land and what people are doing, what engagement teaching and support strategies were happening in universities. So, essentially, I was seeking the combined wisdom of higher education practitioners and this research was very much a joint endeavour with the people who were able to give me that combined wisdom and from that, the National Guidelines for improving student outcomes in online learning were developed and as I say, that was with a great deal of feedback from the people that I interviewed.

So, I spoke with 151 members of staff. All of those involved in online education, teaching, delivery and support. So, that included academic, professional, managerial staff. I visited 16 higher education institutions. 15 in Australia and the 16th was the Open University in the UK. They have been doing this for a long time and I was very interested to see what they were doing. I was looking at what interventions and strategies were they using to improve the retention and academic success of online students? Are any of these being measured or evaluated? In what ways, what are the results and what else is it important for institutions to do to help online students stay and succeed? These are the universities I went to. You'll see that every state was represented. The ACT is the only Territory not represented and the Open University UK. I'm going through these fairly quickly, because you will have access to the slides and I'm quite keen to get to the three essentials.

The 7 key findings from this research, the first is the importance of the whole of institution being on board with this, rather than it being an add-on or something on the side. Needing to be recognised as core business. And these are the kinds of quotes from the people delivering or teaching online education in some way. They were telling me, it's not secondary education and the whole university needs to think that way. It's core business and if it's not, we're always pushing things. Sometimes, they talked about being seen as the poor cousin. Sessional lecturers who taught online often felt they were second-class academics. Part of the strategic approach is ensuring consistency and quality of online delivering and teaching standards, including adequate teaching training to teach online which is different to face-to-face, and adequate resourcing. Some lecturers and teachers were concerned that their online students were getting a lesser experience, and a very important part of this is understanding who the students are and appreciating both their strengths and challenges. They were described as often being very conscientious students, but students with busy lives, lots of balls in the air, some having difficulty with internet access. Often, online students are not well understood, because they can't be seen and it's difficult for an online lecturer to really see who is in their class.

The second key finding was about early intervention, helping students to connect and prepare, telling students what to expect, being more realistic rather than the marketing hype which projects it as being really quite simple. Setting up those realistic expectations. The early personal contact was seen as very important to provide that scaffolded entry into the online environment. Greater emphasis at the front end was often talked about through welcome campaigns, dialling out, having phone conversations. Orientation designed to suit and engage off campus students. A lot of energy is put into on campus orientation, not so much with online students. But at some universities, particularly the regional ones who have been doing distance education for a long time, they were really getting on board with this. Such as this example, we literally jump in our cars, we go and visit students through that orientation period. Facilitating academic preparation was also seen as very important to get them to a place where they're comfortable with being in an academic environment and this is particularly the case, because there are so many older students who've had a long gap in study who come from families where no-one else has been to university, so understanding academic expectations and knowing where to get academic preparation is very important.

This vital role of teacher presence. Anyone who teaches online knows how important this is. The online teacher really is the key to building that sense of belonging to the learning community. Students really need someone on the other end of the system listening to them, communicating with them, giving feedback and as one unit coordinator said, when there's no responses to emails and discussion forums, the attrition rate's higher and the students are really unhappy. But it is a demanding role for online teachers, because the instructor is everything to the students. The engagement demands are different, the reliance on the instructor is much more intensive. Basically, ‘you're it’, in the words of a course coordinator, and it's very time-consuming and tutors are not always paid for that amount of time. Some are told, "Don't spend much time on this,” but in fact, they have to if they're going to do it well, so some feel they're always chasing their tail, because there's not enough time allocated to this.

The fourth one is about design and this is not just the content, but also the way it's delivered. So, it needs to be designed completely differently. As one lecturer said, thinking about it as a different animal to the face-to-face course, designing it completely differently and it needs to be designed in a way that engages and supports through the content and the delivery. So, for instance, allowing opportunities for students to engage with the content online, teacher presence, again very important. Responding to questions and comments and it needs to be able to strengthen the interaction amongst the students, because discussion really is the centrepiece of the classroom experience and as one staff member said to me, many echoed this, you can replicate peer support in an online environment if it's well done, well designed in order to do so.

The fifth finding is about this contact and connection along the student journey. We have the bit about providing that early contact at the front end. This is about maintaining this contact and connection right throughout their journey, which involves reaching out to students proactively. For instance, it could be reaching out to students who seem to be falling by the wayside, having some difficulties. It could be lecturers thinking, well, I'm not going to wait for them to approach me, I'm going to put out a call to say, "How's it going, is there a problem?" In order to do this, it needs a coordinated approach. We can't expect the online teachers, the academic staff to deal with the sheer volume of this. There needs to be a communication strategy at a university level. For example, touch points along the first semester where students are contacted routinely, but personally as well. Linking off to other support systems in a coordinated way so that the left hand knows what the right hand is doing and not everyone's contacting the same student and some students not being contacted at all. We also need to know that it makes a difference. There's plenty of evidence for this. This is just one anecdotal piece of evidence by a course coordinator. Through doing this, reaching out, contacting and communicating, the non-completer rate had really dropped and in this particular course, down to 4%, fail rate down to 1%. In a fully online course, that's quite extraordinary and that was through a whole framework of contact and communication.

The sixth one - and this goes hand-in-hand with number five - is the role of learning analytics, to be able to make this happen more easily. Through learning analytics, through using the data available to universities through the learning management system, interventions can be personalised, even the curriculum can be personalised and students do expect to be remembered. Analytics and other tools help academics and teachers keep up with that, in the words of a learning technology manager. Make learning and tech people your friend, because they are fabulous at doing this. Learning analytics can help us to predict who needs extra help and support and this is just one example of where a particular service was bringing the data together using predictive models, predicting student's risk, using all that data to form that predictive model. And then, in turn, that would inform student interventions, and that would go to student services where we push data through. We take 200 students a day and we contact them. So, these are just examples of how this can be used.

The seventh one - and I think this probably underpins all of them - is that need for collaboration. Because this can't be just left in the hands of one online teacher. It's not fair to do that and it's not going to happen terribly well, because of time demands as much as anything else. Academic and professional staff really need to be working together to embed support within the curriculum so that it's joined up support, academic and nonacademic support, and one example from a library manager was, okay, if their referencing is not great, we'll get one of my team in, create an online resource to embed. Rather than expecting students to find it somewhere else over there, it's here within their curriculum and of course, ensuring equitable access to other support services, particularly specialist support services, disability counselling and so on. Out of hours support for online students, most things are still 9-to-5, and we know most online students are not working 9-to-5. Well, they're at work usually, but not studying 9-to-5. And as one of the equity officers said, we need to be making sure we have a kind of online version for whatever we have on campus.

Okay, so those were the seven key findings and from those findings I was able with the help and feedback from the 151 people I spoke with, plus other interested people who are involved in this, to develop 10 national guidelines for institutions and in developing these, I also used research that we have with students to know what the student voice was saying in those examples I've provided earlier. I'm just going to run through these very quickly. The first one is about knowing who the students are, making sure that the external online cohort is well understood across the institution.

Second one is about developing, implementing, regularly reviewing institution-wide quality standards for online education so that it's not patchy, so that it's not a really good course over here being run by one particular online teacher and a really very inadequate course over here, sometimes in the same faculty, because this person hasn't the experience or the time to do it well, or the support to do it well.

The third one is about early intervention to address students expectations, build their skills and engagement. It's about contacts, connection, preparation.

Number four, explicitly value and support this vital role of teacher presence. So, it needs to be supported through training, resourcing, realistic class sizes, allocated teaching time. I'm sometimes asked, well, what is the right class size, what is the right amount of time? I can't answer that, because it's going to vary a lot depending on what you're teaching and I'm not the expert in this. The people who are teaching this are the experts. Institutions need to rely on their own experts within their institutions to inform them about this and to develop the realistic payment schedules, class sizes based on that expert advice.

Number five is about designing for online and thinking about online first. It was often put to me that if we think about online first, then it's inclusive, accessible and it can easily be translated to face-to-face. Whereas, what we tend to do is the other way around. We design for face-to-face and then think, how are we going to put this online?

The sixth one is about engaging and supporting through curriculum, content and delivery and that comes back to those institutional quality standards that we talked about before.

Seventh one is about collaboration to deliver that holistic student support so it's integrated, embedded.

Eighth one, contact and communicate throughout the student journey through an institutional framework of interventions and that involves number nine, of making strategic use of learning analytics to inform that strategy, to target and personalise the student interventions and where possible, personalising the curriculum, so if someone needs more practice on something, they get more practice, whereas someone who's all over it can move onto the next thing.

And the tenth, final one, but by no means the least important. In many ways, it's the most important, is that institutions need to invest in this through providing sufficient resources. It needs to be seen as core business and funded appropriately. For each of these guidelines, there is a more ideas section in the guidelines document and that's a hyperlink there so when you get the slides, you can look at that and it gives you more examples.

They're the key findings, they're the guidelines and these are guidelines for institutions. I just want to stress that, they're not directed at individual teachers, individual support staff, learning designers. There's no way you should be expected to do all of this. This is very much at an institutional level.

But to move quickly online, we need to boil this down to three essentials. Nicole and I, between us, have really looked at these and thought, how can we boil them down to these three essentials? Let's go through them. The first essential is about recognising the diversity of students’ strengths, needs and circumstances. And that's covered in guidelines one and two. So, for example, not everyone has fast internet and up-to-date computers, nor will everyone be tech savvy and this is particularly the case at the moment. Because I think that there's going to be an awful lot of people who are suddenly going to study at home and this is a concern which I'm sure Nicole will talk about as well for regional and remote Australia, where students who've been younger students studying on campus, they're going back home now, perhaps to their dodgy internet and not experienced with studying online, so this is going to exacerbate the problem. They're all ages and stages and that's certainly the case now with everybody studying online. So, flexibility will be needed.

Students will need to fit study in around their other commitments and responsibilities. Their kids aren't going to school anymore or mostly not, so they're going to have to fit their study in around their children even more if they have families. So, weekends are essential and extensions may be needed. There are examples of students in some of the research that I've worked on saying that things like they're expected to post or complete a task by Wednesday or it's not going to be looked at. Whereas, if they've only been given that task on Monday, they've actually got no hope of doing it if they rely on the weekends to get their work done. They seem like little things, but they're very big things to our online students. Not all will be able to attend synchronous sessions. There’s a lot in social media — a lot of great advice about online learning, a lot of emphasis on synchronous sessions. In my experience of talking to so many people that I have talked about the research that I've done, it's really important to have that good mix of synchronous and asynchronous contact, with probably asynchronous being more important. While some students love the synchronous, asynchronous contact is going to get to all students, which is important.

The second one of these three essentials is that online students need a strong teacher presence and ongoing communication and this is covered to varying degrees in guidelines 3, 4, 7, 8 and 9, so that regular and meaningful communication with teachers through discussion boards, emails, blogs, or students quickly become disengaged and disillusioned. Also, if it can be managed, that institutional contact and communication throughout the student journey, from enrolment right through to graduation.

And the third essential is about course design, that need for it to be interactive and engaging and that's in guidelines 5 and 6. Things like short videos, varied tasks, student-to-student communication, and we're going to talk more about that in the next couple of slides, Nicole's going to take you through some of that. For all of these to occur, adequate resourcing and emphasis on online learning is needed and that's offered in guideline 10.

So, that's how we got to these three essentials and I think it was important to give you that background. What I'm going to do now is ask Nicole to talk in a little more depth about, particularly, teacher presence. Over to you, Nicole. Thank you.

- Thanks very much, Cathy. Hello, everyone. I just want to start by saying that I'm coming at this from the perspective of someone who teaches in enabling education, so also known as uni preparation programs, and at my uni, we teach units face-to-face and online and when it comes to online for our cohort, we find that access to tech and to the internet is a really huge practical consideration, as is how comfortable students are with computers. I just reiterate the importance of the first essential on the previous slide - recognising the diversity of students' strengths, needs and circumstances.

Here on this slide, we have a few tips about how to create teacher presence. The first one here is about doing an introductory short video. The reason behind doing such a video is to welcome students, introduce your unit to your students — to your group of students and the benefit is that students can see you and hear you and get a bit of the human side and it's really a way to start that staff-to-student connection. I know the semester's already started, so if you haven't done such a thing already, you could still do one, because you've been spending the last few weeks making this enormous move to online and now that people are a bit more familiar with studying and working at home, you could still do such a video. In addition, I think that short videos, just a couple of minutes, are a really great way to check in during the semester and how often you do that will really depend on you. So, I know that some staff do very short 2-minute videos … what's happened in that unit at the end of the week and look ahead to what's going to happen in the following week. Others might not do that, but they might do short videos to clarify some assessment tasks and you might find at a time you're getting frequently asked questions about a particular assessment topic and doing a short video can really help with that. Really, a good way to check in, connect, provide information at a stressful time in semester and a good way for students to actually see you and hear you.

I know that lots of people at the moment are using Zoom and Collaborate or using your phone or tablet to do videos. As far as instructional videos go, over the years I've used an app - I just thought I'd mention - called Explain Everything and I really love that, because you can video yourself, but it's like an interactive whiteboard on your tablet. So, you can be demonstrating things. I know colleagues in maths find that really handy and I've taught in writing units and I've demonstrated all sorts of things using that app. So, for example, referencing. How do you reference a journal article? How do you reference a web page? Just these short videos going through referencing for each of those. Then, depending on the type of video, you can usually keep some of those and use them in future semesters.

The second point follows on and is about encouraging students to share a bit about themselves. This is handy to do at the beginning of semester, but again, if you haven't because you've been busy doing other things to move online, you could still do it now. I'd recommend having a bit of structure to it and it could be that you post a few questions on a discussion board, have a discussion item devoted to it, have a question that's kind of related to your unit, but also have a question that helps you to learn more about your students. I like to know where are they in the country or around the world. That way you can visualise where your students are. For me, in my writing unit, I can visualise that, okay, there's a few people in the west of Tasmania and actually quite a few in Far North Queensland and having that in mind, it helps you when you're doing lectures to contextualise some of the informal messages that you might send out. But also, it contextualises some of your content. In my writing unit over the years, I tend to start my lectures with a weather report. Talking about how it might be freezing cold in Launceston, but if I know I've got students in Far North Queensland, I might make some comment about the weather up there. It's a nice little informal way of creating a connection with your online students so they know that you know who they are and where they are.

The third tip is really about creating clear expectations around response times for you and for students. So, the response times from lecturers and tutors and where and how the communication will take place. For example, are you going to send a weekly email about this, about what's happening in that week or a weekly announcement about the content for that week on your LMS? How often will the discussion boards be checked? You don't want students constantly checking them waiting for an answer, so it's important to let them know how often they will be checked, so they have an expectation - oh, I need to wait 24 hours to get a response, or whatever it might be. Particularly if, say, a teacher is a casual tutor or part-time, you can't expect them to be looking seven days a week at the discussion post and replying, so that needs to be clear. If the tutor is working three days a week, then it needs to be known that, okay, the tutor isn't going to be checking on those days, so that needs to be clear for the students, but also between staff in the teaching team for the particular unit or subject. I'm just thinking about the relationship I had with the tutor in the writing unit I taught in. In all of our units, we had a staff member who was a designated distance tutor and I knew that in this particular unit, the tutor wasn't available on Tuesdays and Thursdays, so that was my job to check the discussion boards on Tuesdays and Thursdays and I knew that she was checking them the other days, so between the two of us, we had it covered and that worked really well. It's just organising those things in advance is really important.

Moving onto the fourth tip on expectations, I think I've just covered that a bit, but I'd add ground rules here. If you're someone who's familiar with teaching on campus face-to-face, you'd probably set up ground rules at the beginning of face-to-face lectures and tutes so that students have an understanding of how you expect everyone to behave, to interact, staff and students, and the same goes for online, to set up — you might want to set up etiquette guidelines. In fact, you could get students to help you do that. Say you've got a discussion forum, discussion boards, you could post, have a topic about that - how might we expect each other to communicate in this online environment? Think about what some of the challenges are going to be. If you can't see each other's facial expressions, you don't know if someone's joking or not. Just having those chats in the discussion would be helpful and as a group, you could come up with some etiquette guidelines.

The last dot point here about the more you engage, the more students will engage with you, absolutely. If you take too long to respond, or don't respond to questions on the discussion board, then students will just simply stop using them or they might actually start emailing you and that's not a problem, except you might get 50 emails asking the same question and the benefit of the discussion board is if one student asks the question there, you can respond and 100 or 200 students can see your answer. Everyone is getting to see the questions and everyone's getting to see the answers and the students also realise that, oh, I'm not the only one thinking this, or, someone else has asked that question and it's the exact question I had.

We might move onto the next slide, Cathy. This slide is about engaging and interactive course design. This is the third essential and this first dot point is about building interactivity. How you do this really depends a lot on your cohort, on their access to technology, how reliable their internet is, whether you're trying to do things synchronously or asynchronously. Let’s say it’s a synchronous online tute and I know there’s a lot of that going on at the moment, I’ve seen lots of people tweeting about using Collaborate and Zoom and colleagues around the country are using software like Collaborate and Zoom, and to be interactive, they're getting students to interact in smaller groups in breakout rooms that you can do with things like Zoom. Thinking of some examples, you might have students in physics or chemistry or history or philosophy, they could be working on some kind of problem in a smaller group with their peers in a breakout room and then come back to the whole group to share their solutions, or share their thoughts on it. I've got a colleague in maths who's getting her students to do quite a lot of preparatory work before their online tute and I think this is good advice for everyone, because that way students will have more to share and have questions to ask and this colleague has actually found she's heard more from some students in these online tutes than she's heard from them a couple of weeks ago when they were in the face-to-face on campus classes.

Another colleague in maths has tried using the anonymous polling feature in Zoom. He's used some true and false-type questions. If you're going to do something like this, then it's worth setting it up beforehand, because if you're in the tute and thinking about maths and you're trying to keep your eye on what's going on, you don't want to also be adding another thing to do. If you're going to use the polls, then try and set those up before. And I think he found that it wasn't the greatest thing for deep learning, but a good thing to get student engagement and he found that students, because it was anonymous, didn't feel the pressure that you might if you're in front of a whole class answering a question.

If you're doing asynchronous tasks, you could set questions or tasks for students to consider and post responses on the discussion board and it might be structured in such a way that then the student might be requested to respond to another student's post. You're getting them looking at what other students are doing, not just at their own contribution. Look, how you do this will really depend on how many students are in your unit. If there are hundreds, you'd want to break the discussion forums into tute groups and you'd want staff to be able to be monitoring those.

Onto the second point here about contributing to discussions, absolutely. As a unit coordinator or a lecturer or a tutor, whatever your role is, you can really foster discussion on the discussion boards. I'd just suggest linking them to topics you're covering in your lectures or tutes. In your lecture, there might be a point where you say halfway through - pause, consider these questions and post them on the discussion board. I'm just thinking back to something I've done in the writing unit for online students, and most of it was asynchronous, they'd have, say, an article to read that week and I'd set quite a lot of questions, like 14 questions, not expecting all students to answer the 14. Requesting students respond to two of them on the discussion board and that students chose different questions to what the other students chose. What happens then is you get to cover the 14 questions really, really well and students can learn from each other's responses. Whereas, if you only set two or three questions and then you get 50 replies to those two or three questions, it just gets really repetitive and a bit boring. I think a fair bit of thought needs to go into the types of questions you ask so they're open and relevant and how it's going to work depending on how many students are going to be answering the questions. This is actually interesting having quite a lot of questions and sometimes, the face-to-face students would come and read them, because they got to see all the questions covered, rather than just a couple and then the distance tutor or lecturer can respond to the comments, provide further points, some encouragement, link with what another student might have said, ask them questions to prompt further answers. By doing that, it is going to keep on encouraging the communication on the discussion boards. Without that, the discussion boards, they might start strong and then they just really dissipate.

The third point here - respond, absolutely. I think sometimes, it can feel demoralising as a tutor in an online environment if your reference point is face-to-face. In a face-to-face situation, a student might ask a question, you answer, you can see everyone's face in the class so you can see whether you've answered it well enough, if students all understand or if you need to elaborate a bit more. On a discussion board, you provide an answer, but you can't expect that 50 students are all going to just reply to that, because it's not necessary. It might feel a bit odd, you've got this post out there and there's no response. But don't think of that as a problem. You might not get responses, but a lot of students will actually read your response and learn from it.

And the fourth point here... I cringe a bit when I say this one, because I'm probably guilty of the long recordings, but I am certainly a big fan of the short videos throughout the semester. As far as the recordings go, they might be a bit long, yes, but I try to break them up and vary the tasks. Mix them up, which is the next point in there.

- Sorry Nicole, just on that topic there, we're just running out of time, as well. I'd just encourage you to wrap it up in the next minute or so.

- Sure. As far as mixing it up, breaking it up, if I'm doing a recording, I really talk to the online students, so that helps if you know where they are. You might start by pointing out something that's happened in Far North Queensland or Western Australia. Then, let's say they've done the first part of the lecture, then request that they pause or stop and then have a few questions to reflect on or do a particular exercise or a quiz. Think about these three questions, post your thoughts on the weekly discussion board. So then, you're linking what's happening in the lecture to what's going on in the discussion boards and to future interaction on the discussion boards and then you might say, "Okay now, part two of the recording," so there's times when they're listening, making notes, times when students are reflecting, doing some kind of activity.

I'll move onto the last point there which is a really important one that Cathy touched on about synchronous and asynchronous. Often, students choose online study because they can't make the synchronous on campus courses. They have work, children, parents to care for, et cetera. It's really important to have the content accessible asynchronously. Obviously, right now in the current COVID19 context, they're not choosing the move, the move's happening, but we still can't assume that they're going to be free at the scheduled times for the synchronous sessions. They might be home with their children and perhaps their children are using their devices during the day for their schooling. Asynchronous options are very important. There are, of course, benefits with the synchronous. Students can hear you and see you, get to know each other, ask questions in realtime, but I'd just say, if you're doing this, it needs to be voluntary so you're not excluding students who can't make those sessions. You could also record them so that students who can't make them can view them later on. Just something that's come out of my research with students in regional and remote areas is they do like the option to have a synchronous question and answer session, but what they recommend is having a couple of times. So, one during the day and then one at night for students who aren't free during the day.

I just want to mention just to finish off that you might be noticing how tiring it is to be online — in online meetings all the time and your students will be feeling like that, too. They might be looking towards asynchronous tasks.

- Thanks, Nicole. Darlene, do we have time to take any questions?

- Yes, we do. We've had great questions coming through. We won't be able to get to them all, that's for sure, but we might encourage, because we've actually had - which has been great - a lot of chat in the chat. If people actually want to put their questions over into the Q&A box instead of the chat, we have been pulling out questions from both. But that might help us see the questions as they're coming in now, because the chat's been busy. Well done, everybody, for the interactivity and for answering questions. I jinxed myself at the beginning of this. My internet totally went out 10 minutes in. I'm now hot-spotting my daughter's phone. The joys of technology! We also lost a couple of people who had to leave with internet issues. It's the times we're in at the moment. So, thank you both for that presentation. I'm just finding my Google Docs, excuse me. One of the first questions we got first was asking - and I hope you didn't answer this, raise this when I wasn't online - it was around mobile phones. Do you know how many students are using mobile phones, in any of your research, to access their online content?

- Look, in my experience of student research, a lot do rely on mobile devices. Having said that, I think they quickly find out that they can't complete their course by using a mobile device. That comes back to the expectations that I think — I often talk about TV ads saying, “Study any time anywhere,” about online learning and there's footage of someone on a bus on their mobile phone. We need to set up the expectation more clearly that they're not going to be able to do it all on their mobile phone. Having said that, I think the technologies that are being used at universities have improved a lot, so a lot can be done on mobile devices, but they do need to know that they need to have access to a proper computer. Nicole, do you agree?

- I just think when students are choosing to be online, you can make that expectation clear and say, okay, to be online you need to have access to the internet and a computer and sometimes, the student's access is going to a campus, going to their local campus. At the moment, they don't have their usual workaround and I've just heard from a colleague in the area I work in and a lot of her students who were face-to-face and now are online, a lot of them are using their phones and they can't just go like that and get a computer and it's difficult for them to go somewhere to access a computer. So, currently, that is definitely happening where a lot are using mobile phones.

- In your discussions and so forth, a couple of people have asked questions around accessibility and I suppose that's often a challenge to ensure that whatever we're using to improve the online experience is actually going to be accessible for all, but a couple of people have also noted that sometimes, programs or things present that they're accessible and they might be to the student, but then staff who experience disability or needing things such as a screen reader, it may not be accessible at the back end. Have you had any experience in that area at all or come across any issues?

- Most of the staff I spoke with in my research were very conscious about the need to make everything really accessible and I think that's what comes back to the design, the principles of universal design. I know it's hard at the moment, because people are having to do things quickly. But I think you raise an important point that anything that is being put up quickly, we can't forget that it needs to be accessible for all. Nicole, do you have any thoughts on that?

- Yes, I think sometimes, as every year goes by, we can do more fancy things on learning management systems, but they're not always accessible. We have to always be aware of that and even something like making sure that students can download lectures - and this is something I'll talk about next week - that a lot of students cannot just watch a lecture, so, thinking about what they can access with their internet connection. But it's kind of hard sometimes as someone who teaches to keep up-to-date with what's going on with the LMSs and realising that last year, there was a button students could click on to download and I need to do something else to make sure that’s accessible or downloadable. That’s just one little example.

- There are a couple of questions around privacy and contacting students. There was one question around, do you need permission to contact students on their mobile phone? Also, a question around recording students, is that problematic? Have you come across this issue of privacy and confidentiality in the online space?

- If they've provided their mobile phone number on enrolment, I don't think there's any privacy issues around contacting them, because that's the number they've provided. What was the other one?

- The other one was around if you're doing any recordings of them?

- You'd need to let them know that you're recording it and if anyone objects to that… Generally, it would be worth looking at the privacy statement that they sign when they enrol, because every university has that, just to see what they have agreed to or to seek advice on that from your own university to get an idea on that. Nicole, have you got thoughts on that?

- That's a really good question. I've always assumed if I can go into the university system and see the student's information, I can contact them. I don't know 100%.

- I'm pretty sure that's right.

- On that note of phoning, normally you'd phone from your… if you're teaching and you want to phone a student, you'd phone from your work phone number and I've always been very clear not to give out my mobile phone and I know everyone's working from home now, but I'd mention whatever your university uses. For example, we have Skype for Business as a phone, you can put that app on your phone so when you're calling a student, your mobile number is not coming up, your work number is. Just going off on a tangent there, but something worth thinking about, because you don't want everyone having your mobile number.

- We're running out of time. There are quite a few questions here, so we will trawl through them and see if Cathy and Nicole can answer any of those and we'll put them up on the website with the video of the webinar and also a copy of the presentations. Just one final question Cathy, with the national guidelines, what’s next and how can people get involved?

- Okay, well, there's a link on the slide that's there now to the national guidelines and that's where they can download them. In terms of how people can get involved, there's research continuing all the time about improving outcomes in online learning. Any opportunities that those of you who would like to participate in any such research, I'd just encourage you to take the opportunity to do so as and when that opportunity arises. If you keep in touch with the National Centre for Student Equity and Higher Education website, you'll see a lot of research that's happening and there may be opportunities to get involved in some of that if it's in your area of interest. But I think the other thing I'd love you all to do is to keep bringing these national guidelines to the attention of senior administrators in universities and I know a lot of people have said to me, “I’m going to wave these under the nose of our vice-chancellor,” because I think they are very much aimed at institutions and we need to be trying to get these implemented at an institutional level and some universities are picking these up which is great, but if you can help by bringing these to the attention of the right people at your university, then that would be wonderful.