DARLENE MCLENNAN: Thank you, everybody, who is joining us online today. We are in a room of about 70 people at the Monash City Campus in Collins Street in Melbourne. We have had a fabulous, really productive day, had some good food at lunch as well, making you all jealous. I hope you’ve had some nice lunch. It has been a really robust and great conversation and also brilliant networking, and Frederic is going to share some of those learnings with you all today.

But first I want to start by acknowledging the traditional owners of the land on which we are today here in Melbourne, but also the lands of everybody around Australia. And if people who have attended our webinars before, if you’d like to put into the chat the country that you are on, that would be fabulous.

We will be closed captioning this webinar so people can access those closed captions by clicking on the cc button on the top or bottom of their screen. If you have any issues in the back end, you can email us at admin@adcet.edu.au. If I’ve done that wrong, Jane will put that into the chat.

Frederic is going to speak for around 40/45 minutes and then we will go to questions. We will have questions from the room and also in the chat online. If you want to ask Frederic some questions, please put that in the Q&A, not the chat, just so we will be able to grab that from there.

The presentation today is being recorded and it is going to be made available on the ADCET website. I think that's all. I wish you could see everybody here. We might at the end, if we get a chance, turn the computer around and we will all say goodbye to you all at the end of the day. We have currently have 70 people online and 70 people in the room, so I think we've done well. Thank you. I will hand over to Frederic.

FREDERIC FOVET: Thank you. Welcome to all the folks joining us online. I am also going to do a land acknowledgement of my own. I just want to say I'm honoured to live and work on the unceded lands and ancestral territory of the Syilx people, otherwise known as the Okanagan Valley which you can see on the screen at the moment. It’s a valley in the middle of British Columbia. I also want to say that I have the pleasure of working on unceded ancestral territory of the Syilx people, and I also acknowledge the Aboriginal custodians of this land I am here on today and elders and their claims to land as well.

Welcome to this session, if you are joining us online and if you are in the room. We will continue with the reflection that we’ve had. I had a difficult task of creating this hybrid recipe. So what I’m going to do is I will do a quick recap of what we have discussed today, which will be useful for the folks online. It will enable people in the room to think about action plan and what piece of that reflection you want to take into 2023 as you start looking at your blueprint for the work that you're doing in UDL, and maybe to develop that work further. I have a whole bunch of posted questions already, which will get me going at the end of the recap and then I will take questions from the chat and the room as well as we continue.

So the starting point today – and I’m just going to repeat that for the folks in the room that heard that this morning – that really we are the crunch really in the historical development of UDL in the sense that we have had North America certainly about 20 years now of sporadic communities of practice, individual faculty and individual services developing a lot of great UDL initiatives, but what we're not seeing as a sort of scaling up and across campus sort of implementations and managed to really capture that systemic sort of growth and to really manage to embed themself right across services.

As we’ve talked about today, we can certainly see all the stakeholders and the areas of need, but creating the matrix and managing to grow that into an action plan for all campus is a challenge still to come from most of us. I think I can talk and say globally around the world we haven't seen any institutions that has managed to get to the new frontier yet. This is what we are here today to think about for the Australian context what it might look like if we want to carry that agenda forward.

We have had a lot of literature on why is this beneficial for diverse learners? Best to do this in a classroom but we have been missing that literature and scholarship about how to grow this from the purely organisational and strategic dimension, which is a very different dimension, and the algorithms are going to be different, et cetera, and that's what we focussed on today.

We looked at three different areas, first of all. I'm going to go through them in turns and each of them contain some threads, and for folks in the room, it is a recap to think about what you want to really focus on and take with you and for the people online it is an introductions to all of the rich discussions we've had today.

The first angle of reflection was the approach is everything, and this notion of first of all we have to reflect about how to present this to the stakeholders. So thread 1 was how does one begin and how do we brand this with our UDL colleagues. First of all, we have seen and we have a board up there that has a good dozen stakeholders from students, to librarians, to structural designers, senior management, HR, legal, all of these stakeholders that we have to involve, but we have to think carefully about how to put that and present that information, put that information forward.

We discussed two models today, either presenting something entirely new and getting that novelty aspect, or then saying this is something you have already done, you are already on that spectrum of development on UDL, we just need to see you moving a little bit further to continue the work that you're doing. We've seen that there is no one size fits all. There is no one solution that works better than the others, but all campuses will have to have a close look at their history, their culture and size and what works best for them. And a theme today has been this notion of ecological blue mapping, that we need to look at the canvas of a campus from ecological perspective to see what suits its needs best and this will give you a clue on the first two choices that we have out of the box or something that we're used to and we’re just developing further.

The second was the notion of leverage and this notion that, really, amongst all these stakeholders we also had a rising number of needs and we had identified six that I talked about today in terms of pressing needs, why the landscape is changing, and why we need something new and something that will meet the needs of this landscape which is otherwise cracking. I think we can agree to them. We have talked about several times that the old model of accessibility through accommodation is really cracking at the seams, we need something new. We need something that can deal with the demographics, with the need for social model practices, and that's really imbeds itself well with EDI and with a wider look of diversity on campuses.

So finding the leverage again will be essential that we do from an ecological perspective because not every campus will be able to focus on all the stakeholders and all the needs that exist, so choosing adequately and wisely the main stakeholders you want to prioritise and the needs you are going to acknowledge and work with is going to be important.

Thread No.2 is recognising and acknowledging the needs. And this man today in our discussion is saying to take the time for people to acknowledge the fact that they need something new, they need a new approach, whether it is faculty and they are telling you that they need more sustainable teaching practices, whether it’s accessibility folks that are telling you the old system doesn’t work, we need to move towards something else, but you give time and pockets of opportunities for people to acknowledge and verbalise a fact that the older way no longer works and it is time to move to something else. And it may seem like something symbolic, but giving people the opportunity for that time to acknowledge the frustrations that they have is going to be important in them giving you buy-in to something that you present to them, in this instance UDL.

The last thread in this segment of the talk was to look at the opportune moment that as presented by the end of the COVID landscape. We had an overwhelming majority of participants in the room who thought that the COVID crisis had been beneficial to the work that we do with UDL and UDL implementation. I tend to agree with that. Although they have been sporadic areas of tension, overall it’s created an opportune landscape for us to really embrace this. Particularly, again, just to remind you the main findings in my research is that for the first time ever in history most educators across sectors are saying they are finally embracing the role of designer and understanding the impact of that design. For us, in terms of the UDL advocacy, it is phenomenal. It is going to be some rich ground there, fertile ground for us to ground some action as we go into 2023.

So questions I have for you as I finish that section, you know, these are key factors of access, but they are currently an afterthought for many of UDL advocates. So how do we change mindsets, how do we not have these factors become afterthoughts, but to have them early on in our development plan? Particularly, how do we put on the brakes? Everyone in this room is excited and wants to move this forward, but a lot of what I have talked about today, particularly in the first part, is actually about putting on the brakes and going back to the blueprint and thinking strategically before we actually do it. So that’s my question for you all, is how do we slow down enthusiasm and plan before we jump into action because that's been the pitfall in the last 10 years, is people have been too excited and too willing to jump in into the fire, but then it has been really difficult after the fact to try and do that strategic piece. It needs to be done before you really jump in. So a question for you online and for you in the room as well.

Section 2 was entitled “it’s a messy job but someone has to do it. We have reflected on the ecology. Who should be driving this movement? Who should be involved and who should be at the centre of the drive for development. And there were five threads here. The first one was being aware of institutional and strategic tension. We talked about a lot of points of tension between teaching and learning in accessibility services, between accessibility services and faculty. We talked about the lack of collaboration and communication between structural design, the accessibility folks and the faculty. Lots to work on, right, from people in the room. I hope on your to-do list there's a lot of question marks and thought for the future, collaborations to work on, to focus on, to develop further, new collaborations to develop, et cetera.

Whilst we talked about creating multidisciplinary approaches to UDL implementation, and by this I meant that so far we really focused UDL on disability and impairment. There is a need to look at it in a wider way and look at diversity in terms of also including people who support culturally diverse students and international students, second language learners, lifelong learners, the full range of diverse learners which are on our campuses.

At the moment, as we explained, we're very siloed, we’re very fragmented, we don't have many natural organic collaborations or avenues for communication with these people, so how do we bring them in? Do we create this multidisciplinary approach? It is very easy these days to talk about multidisciplinary approaches. There is a lot of work that goes into that word. As we leave today and we wrap up today, think about all the investment, time and effort that this is going to take before we become truly multidisciplinary in the way we approach this.

We talked about being conceptually consistent and we talked about a lot of contradictions that exist. We have a desire to scale up our UDL efforts but as we try to scale them up, often we reveal some of the contradiction, the conceptual contradictions that are present in our path. We talked about accessibility services often being stuck in medical model, in deficit model procedures. We could talk more generally about a lot of stuff that we do on campus being bureaucratic and being quite opposed to what we're talking about in terms of UDL and in terms of the sort of free-flowing accessibility sort of processes. So a lot of reflection. We have to do that. There’s a whole board over there that you can’t see but it talks about UDL and research, UDL and graduate work, UDL with employees. All of these points of friction that we need to solve before people take us seriously.

It’s a question of credibility. We won't achieve the credibility unless we have a hard look at ourselves and we solve some of the tensions and some of the contradiction that exist in discourse and positioning.

We also talked about supporting campuses’ transition to a new mindset. Not easy. A lot of what is involved at the moment is moving people between two different ways of doing things. As I talked today, I talked about sitting between two chairs. It’s really uncomfortable to sit between two chairs and it’s very hard to supervise and support staff who are maybe feeling really threatened by the fact that they are doing things in an old way and you're asking them to do things in a new way and this involves a complete rethink about their self-perception of themselves in their job. So it could be accessibility in supporting faculty instead of supporting students; it could be people still having to meet the need for accommodation through regular funding models, but they have to start thinking about working with faculty on doing things in a totally different way, sometimes with no funding or sometimes with a different envelope of funding. So transitioning people into that new mindset is not easy and requires a lot of forward thinking and proactive reflection on all of us.

The last thread was involving students. Again today we talked about how easy it is on paper but how difficult it can be. Students have, in the greatest part, been left out of the equation altogether. Very recently I was asked to adjudicate on the UDL John Kelly Awards in Ireland, and the institutional awards have a component specifically that asks us to look at the ease with which these institutions have been able to communicate their UDL policy to students. I would say – and I’m sure the organisers would agree with me - that I was definitely the weakest rating for all of the organisations. They are good at doing the research piece and the strategic piece and now good at communicating with the rest of the world the results and findings of what they were doing, but the student piece wasn't always astutely developed. It was emerging. It was there but not yet systemic and endemic in the way we function.

So have a think about that today. I think it’s a big takeaway from today, how do we involve students in an authentic way, whether it’s a working group. I talked about the necessity for having workshops and training and professional development and students themselves. I talked about the difficulties which will occur if you don't communicate in a transparent and authentic way with the students. I talk often about transitional friction which means we don’t always understand what we are doing when we are moving today UDL and that can backfire and can actually be really counterproductive for a lot of faculty who may feel like, “But I tried, and so energetic and enthusiastic, and look, the first feedback I get from students is they don’t like it.” It can be truly detrimental, and it stops a lot of people in their track if you’re not prepared for that and you don’t see the need to have that dialogue and authenticity.

So some questions I leave you here with are stakeholders and advocates yearn for clean processes, but this is not a clean process. Everything I described today is messy as it gets. How comfortable are you with messiness and risk taking and jumping in and doing all this. But a lot of questions I get asked when I did those four years of promotion of UDL was how did you have the strength and the forethought to jump in and do that? Well, I didn't think. That’s why I did it. Sometimes you have to jump in and do it because if you start thinking about how difficult and challenging and complex it's going to be, you might be finding it daunting that you don’t do it, but we need change and we need commitment to change, so I encourage you to dive in and do this and really embrace the messiness.

All of us that work in social sciences, you know very few of the processes that we do and investigate and we look at are ever clean and easy because they are about interactions between humans and they do inherently become complex, and need subtlety and nuance, and we are all able to bring that. We shouldn't be afraid of it but embrace the fact that it is complex and a job that’s going to take many more decades and it will involve a lot of subtle nuanced discourses and that is normal

Section 3 was acknowledging the remaining hurdles. We talked about identifying blind spots. We certainly mentioned that until very recently, for example, UDL wasn't talking about race much. It’s changing now. There has been a lot of anti-racism education connected with UDL. Still very, very little work around the students’ decolonisation and UDL so we need to work a lot there. We talked very early on about inviting indigenous colleagues into that scholarship, and sometimes I think indigenous colleagues were quick to say, "I tried but it didn't work". Well, keep trying. This isn't going to happen overnight and it’s only because we persist, and we keep sending invitations and making that space hospitable to our colleagues that eventually they will feel welcome in coming into that space and working with us on the potential for UDL in the inclusion of indigenous students.

We talked about mental health. We have a colleague here who is starting a scholarship on mental health, the importance of UDL on mental health. There are other blind spots. We have to keep challenging ourselves that there are no easy solutions here either and if we took it and said “yes, yes, we've done it all”, we limit the work we can do with UDL. I think it has been a running theme as well. You know, accepting that challenge, accepting is it UDL or is it something else is out of question, for the frontiers that we have to push UDL towards and that is part of the potential of this model. It is not proscriptive, it’s not limited, it’s not finite. On the contrary, it’s work that we can carry on and use for the rest of career wise or sort of lifelong sort of development for teaching

Acknowledge power dynamics. We have talked amply today about how complex this makes the work that we do around UDL. I have talked about universities in further education of campuses, et cetera, being multi-layered. We have different background, we have different status, we are hierarchical, we are conscious of status. This impacts the level of communication we have. These continuous hurdles that we encounter in the work that we do, so we have to work at deconstructing those power dynamics because that's the only way we are going to be able to actually move into authentic conversations and real collaborations with all of these folks.

It is a continuous work. It is the theme of the decade thinking of power dynamics and we are certainly not exempt within these environments. We have to keep thinking about that. I think today I talked about the two solitudes. And I said it’s a term from Canada which referred to the misunderstandings between French and English, but I said I like using those terms to talk about the misunderstandings between faculty and the support staff. And we often are very quick to think the other side doesn't understand. The other side also is dealing with often lots of different variables and that misunderstanding goes both ways, both in the way accessibility folks don’t always understand faculty and faculty don’t always understand accessibility folks. It has been the joke in my life that I was accessibility for four years and I was being told “You’re not faculty, you don’t understand.” And now I’m faculty and I get told, “You’re not accessibility. You don’t understand.” Is there no winning? Until we break that down and we're able to have reciprocal and equal dialogues, it is going to be difficult.

And the last one – no, the two last ones. One was to acknowledge the inherent limitations of UDL within the sophisticated audience. We talked about the need to talk about inclusive design as being one step further than UDL, never being satisfied with the fact that UDL and self, that's going to be fine. We need to accept the need for further ethnographic curiosity into the lived experience of people with disabilities, that sitting in your office and hypothesising about barriers is one thing but nothing is going to replace the direct contact that you can have with people with the lived experience. That's interesting both intellectually, as you do the UDL work, but in your life generally that you should be curious about the lived experience of people with disabilities and want to meet them and be part of that life and understand it more fully from that perspective, so a lot of work to be done there.

The last aspect was looking at the need for not being too quickly satisfied with the fact that UDL and inclusive design and work around accessibility is an end in itself, but understanding that there are other concerns in terms of pedagogy, transformative pedagogy, student-centred pedagogies that we need to continue working on. Right through the talk today you probably noticed I talked about that happy place where there is a lot of other important work that gets done, particularly during Covid that got accelerated during Covid around social constructivism, how do we support our students as they learn to work in teams and constructivism, how do we make learners autonomous, put them in the driver's seat, work from an inquiry-based position, et cetera. A lot of work around exponential learning that happened during COVID, learning firsthand, learning from experience, outside the classroom, but all of those things intersect with accessibility and inclusion and UDL and that’s where the happy place is. Never be satisfied that I’ve ticked a box and I’m doing UDL, I’m doing inclusive design stuff, I’m all good. It doesn't stop that inquiry which is lifelong and career long about how to make teaching and learning richer and more suited to the needs of diverse learners.

Again, I get the example that we saw a lot during COVID of courses that were perfectly accessible and totally UDL in design and inclusive but did not meet the needs of our learners.

And we have students saying, “Well, that’s a course I don’t like, it wasn’t enough and I needed a personal dimension and it wasn’t there.” So that’s a call for action for all of us to think, yes, it is a central concern, a pillar. We need to make everything fully inclusive and accessible, but there are other things that are important too on that intersect with that as well.

So a question I have for you there is that the new environment where benchmarks are everything how can we feel comfortable with a process that every ends. I know it is a big question but it is, you know, and today people have started talking about evidence‑based and when do we know that we've succeeded and when do we know we've got the right results, et cetera, and yet it's a process that I've described as being messy and never finite and continuing lifelong. So you have a contradiction there. And it's, again, a contradiction that you have to embrace, that yes, we keep learning through our career about teaching and learning. We get better and better at it. But we are pressured on certain benchmarking to show that also what we do is evidence‑based and we are creating change, positive change, it's having impact on retention, et cetera, and that's something that we have to get comfortable with. So no easy answer there. I'm going to say you have to navigate both these comparatives and be able to feel at ease there.

And also, I think whilst we yearn for a teaching and learning model that offers all the solutions, it may be Utopian. And it's not because you do an awful lot of research on UDL that you're not going to have to keep reading and do research on other teaching and learning philosophies, and that's part of life.

Now, for us it makes it more complex because if you are not part of teaching and learning and you are not faculty and you are supporting, it means you have to offer that support in regards to more than one dimension, not just accessibility and inclusion but other comparatives as well in terms of teaching and learning.

So this hopefully takes you to a point where you can feel strong and bold going into 2023. I think it's important that you embrace this challenge. And I've presented a lot of challenges today. Understand it's not a finite process. There's no end today. I have talked about spectrum today, it's about moving people in the right direction and keeping them moving. It shouldn't be exhaustive either. I'm always a bit wary when I do sessions like this that you have people who come at the end and say, "Well, I'm going home today and I'm redesigning everything." Pace yourself, right? Be gentle on yourself. If we've learnt anything during COVID it is that we have to be gentle on ourselves, we have to learn to pace ourselves, be sustainable in the way we handle our resources but ourselves as well. So, you know, take your time.

We had a lot of discussions today. There's no greater motivation than someone having gone through the whole process of UDL about one barrier in their course and a student or students coming back and saying, "I really love that. That was really great. You've changed my entire life." Now, the difficulty is that's not going to happen two minutes after you've done it. It's a longitudinal process. You know, I receive emails from students I had in K‑12 fifteen years ago, who said, "Remember that day when you did that, that changed my life." And unfortunately, in teaching and learning that's what happens. That feedback gets to you way, way later. So don't be too discouraged if it doesn't come right away. It will come and when it comes it's really powerful and really makes you feel that all that investment and all the work I did in redesign made a huge difference. Again because we're in the early environments, the students are moving on, they've got other things they have to do. They don't always have the time to come back to you and say, you know, thank you. But they will. At another point they come back, they reflect and come back and say, "That made a huge difference." And when you stick with this long enough you realise that that feedback does come. And that becomes the greatest motivation in trying the next thing and the next modification on your course, your assessment, et cetera.

So be bold and create new alliances. That was another takeaway today. I kept talking about communication and new relationships, et cetera. So as you leave today, think about all these new collaborations you need to envisage in 2023. Not just envisage but at one point you have to break the silos and get them happening. It's not easy. Again, that study I did on structural design is faculty and accessibility. There's three groups of folks. We don't know how to talk to each other. We're going to have to learn and move this forward and actually learn how to do things differently.

Imagine the unimaginable, is another note I put down here. UDL is an innovative landscape shifting and transformative process. It cannot be born out of repetitive bureaucratic processes. We can't hope to do retrofitting and say, "Suddenly somewhere UDL will happen." You need to take a jump and be bold and make change happen. And that sometimes means disregarding the way we do things in a habitual way and moving forward.

Make yourself comfortable with the shifting landscape while never resisting change. That's hard too. And a lot of what I talked about today was supporting others, too, as they shift into new mindsets and shift into new ways of doing things. It sounds easy but, to be honest, from my experience supervising staff that's what I found the hardest because people do panic as you shift them into new systems and new ways of doing things. And it questions their identity and professional image of themselves, so there is a lot of nurturing to be done there in supporting people as they find themselves, they find a new them in the new vision that you are offering them of the future.

Come back to the needs approach all the time. And I hope this has been obvious today that no one wants to do something just because you are presenting them with a new model. It's got to respond to a need. So going back always and making sure you let people affirm what that need is, and you show them the connection between what you are putting forward as UDL and the need that exists is going to be really crucial in the buy‑in. You know, I used to walk into meetings and be just like, "Let me talk to you about UDL." And it really took me two years working on a large campus to sit back and think walk into a room and be silent and say, "Right, accessibility." And leave it at that. And people would start talking. "I'm not happy about this, I'm not happy about this, this isn't working." Right, okay, now we have something to talk about. Let's talk about potentials and solutions, and that's where UDL fits in. So it really needs to connect with something there that people are feeling as a pressure.

And connect UDL back to the social model positioning at all times. I hope I've shown you this today. There's a real risk that if we take UDL, as we take it, we scale it up and we develop it and showcase it to others, we lose the sense that the essential act is you are accepting that role and saying, "Actually, disability is that friction, that lack of fit between the way I design and people's embodiment. I need to return to that. That needs to be that guiding lens on my practice. And a lot of people forget, you see a lot of UDL folks who are like they've lost the plot, lost the track. So go back to that. This is the essential part. The rest is superficial. It's like this is the important part. It will avoid you falling into checklists, avoid falling into a list of tools. We haven't had much time to talk about this but there is no tool that is UDL. During COVID, for example, people said,

During COVID, for example, people said, “Oh, the flip classroom, the flip classroom is fantastic. It’s going to solve all our problems.” It did sometimes. But the flip classroom is not inherently UDL and not UDL. It depends to what degree you use it and how often you use it and where you use it. So for those of you not familiar, the flip classroom is a notion you put all the material online and the students immerse themselves in it and when you are interacting with them it is problem solving and applying and really going to that dialogue place. If you do that all the time you are removing barriers for learners and creating barriers for others. So that is not inherently UDL. It depends to what extent. Once in a while, yeah, it’s great. It will give some motivation to learners who otherwise drown in that lecture style. But if you do it all the time, you're marginalising others, you are creating barriers for other learners.

So really important that we always see things in terms of that critical lens and looking at social model. We don't just take a tool or a strategy and say this is UDL in itself, it's not. Then reassure yourself that you're not working yourself out of a job. That came up a couple of times. I did a presentation a few years back which was working myself out of a job. You're never working yourself out of a job. You will reinvent your professional identity within the new landscape of UDL. By the time I had finished working at McGill for four years, a lot of my case officers were very happy doing different jobs and were reinventing their job doing something totally different. And that's what's dynamic about the sector we're in. Don't be afraid of that. That's a perpetuated myth that we need to debunk.

I think that leaves it at that. I have a few questions here, but I know Darlene has questions as well. We’ve got about 10 minutes, I think, for questions. Otherwise, I did get a whole bunch from the room, so - - -

DARLENE: There you go. So thank you, everybody, for once again joining us online and in the room. For those online you can put your questions in the Q&A panel there and David will offer to answer them. David, do you have one question there?

DAVID: We’ve got a question from Elizabeth online. Do you have tips or advice about engaging students with lived experience of innovation of UDL, feedback on what is and isn't working?

FREDERIC: Absolutely. I thin k often in the UDL process you hypothesise about the barriers, you use your UDL principle to redesign, you find a design solution, you implement it, and people often miss the last part. You ask your students if it's working, and we are very quick to skip back and start the next thing. But don’t forget, you ask your students if it's working. They would be more than happy to tell you if it’s made a difference or not. Again there’s that transparency. They won’t understand what you're doing unless you actually talk to them about what you’re doing.

For me I do it, for example, through my learning management system, but I will put videos at the start saying this is what orientates my practice. This is why I make certain choices within these courses. Understand my choices within this wider intention and then I will repeat that in the first class and then I will repeat again and say, “Do you understand the choices I’m making?”, in light of this. And again, trust in young people. Even from school onwards, people say “I can't talk to students about the choices I make better because they won’t understand.” Of course they will understand it. You see elementary students understand fully the choices that you make, and they understand why you make them. Contextualise things for your learner. They will more than understand what you’re trying to do. And this is helpful because your learner may really thrive in what you're doing but still has to go back to a course that is traditionally taught the period after. They have to learn that ability to navigate systems that are contradictory in a way that is not happening across the board. It is more important to support them and have those conversations with them. But at the wider level as well systemically, we talk to them about having workshops and training and really making students part of the whole process, including having them in the whole UDL branding aspects, they're the ones that give great messaging, and involve volunteers in that role as well.

DARLENE: Thank you. The challenge is, David, I don’t think the online actually hears that. We might get you to run up here.

DAVID: If I read the question, could you repeat the question?

DARLENE: I can read it from here too. Does anybody in the room have a question? Just being aware that you are being recorded for prosperity. Yes, feel free to ask any questions. As Frederic says, we’ve got a whole heap. Any questions? I just also want to give a quick plug and I will just before we lose our online audience. ADCET is working hard to make sure we’ve got lots of resources to support you in your practice and we actually have content around universal design for learning, and some people today that I've talked to didn't realise that we have an e-learning resource around UDL. We will in an email following up from this session provide you with links. We are also putting links into the chat for the online audience.

Also one of the questions that was raised today was around accessible ICT procurement. We have recently had people who didn't know, we have launched an accessible ICT procurement guide for universities. That is really impactful that we hope universities will embed in their procurement and that's a yes, thank you. We actually met with the TAFE directors a couple of weeks ago and we look like we will be implementing one for TAFE as well in the New Year.

We also have a range of new content that we have developed around inclusive teaching, and teaching with technology that we’ve just put on our front page that the UTS have supported us to develop and that once again talks about everything from Mentimeter and other online tools we use to make sure they're as accessible as possible. We're hoping that what we do is supporting your practice.

We also have a community of practice. We have over 100 members across Australia. We're putting the link into the chat, but we will also provide everybody here to say with a link on how to join the community of practice, the wonderful Jen Cousins facilitates that with some colleagues. It’s a community of practice and we will all be facilitating that next year, but it’s a really powerful way to get together. And our last meeting we actually talked about an award system as well, similar to what Frederic spoke today about, the AHEAD Ireland program because that will be a celebration of what we're all doing. So I have taken on the floor, but I will let you do some questions.

FREDERIC: I had a couple of questions that are connected about low hanging fruit, what would have the most impact on students with disabilities in terms of UDL implementation. And actually, to be honest, a lot of very simple UDL strategies have an immediate impact, certainly on the level of demands that are made with student services, and also from the experiences I've had with my own courses. So already simple things like ensuring that all your material is digitally available. It seems ridiculous, but when I was at McGill I had a full-time person digitalising material. Can you imagine 2022 people are still defaulting to paper and paper copies, and they are unreadable, and things like this. And that's definitely low-hanging fruit. Deadlines and working around UDL strategies around deadlines. We talked today about an example I had had from practice around this, 6 days, 7 days, or whatever, of grace periods, that you keep the accountability path, but learners are able to navigate this without you having intrusive questions of asking why. It applies to everyone, and everyone finds what they need out of that. That is very easy as well. Mostly around, again, and that connects with what I talked about mental health, with the deadlines with mental health, you saw a lot of that, with the digitalisation of material again. A lot gets solved. With learning management systems as well, whether with Canvas or Moodle, et cetera, there are different levels of accessing the level of complexities, giving people choice and not just five-piece history, but one being complex and one easier, one really short, et cetera. People have different levels of scaffolding into outcomes. I think those three methods already, you're getting rid of a lot of issues of accessibility there with the three simple methods. Lots of low hanging fruits.

I had a really interesting question on – remember I showed you the illustration from my article with a stakeholder in the middle and thinking about the ecology or the relationship with the role on campus. Someone said should we rethink that and have a hive formation, does it have to be centralised around someone? I think that is really important. If you look at some of the models that are occurring now, Trinity College, Dublin has started Trinity Inclusive, and I was part of this as part of a fellowship, and the principle was to have ambassadors, so they really thought about this strategically. They actually onboarded a whole bunch of faculty ambassadors. They didn’t call it UDL, they called it inclusive, but a lot of what they do is UDL. And then they had a commitment of taking part in professional development. I met with them three times during that professional development before, in the middle and after. Off they went to the departments, and they became the ambassador of all that work that’s happening around the campus.

That's a hive formation. You're starting to think about matrix and people doing work in a spread way across your campus. Lots of creativity there. I think we can break out of that model that has one unit or one department or one body in the middle and that might be something in terms of sustainable development that works better.

I had a question about convincing senior administration. I would take you back to that slide where I had the six needs today, and I think definitely the money part works, right. So when you look at sustainability and the growing demographics, it is extremely costly to do what we do at the moment and having different ways of doing is definitely something that is going to talk to your senior administration. Now, some of you in the room might say, but that's really cynical and we shouldn't be thinking about accessibility services just being costly. Again, I hope you've seen today, you have to be practical and pragmatic, and you need a full deck of cards when you walk into a room and you want to work a room. I don't necessarily agree with the financial argument, but it is convincing for some of the people you are going to talk to. And I think this whole notion of new liberals, and I wrote an article at one point saying we can fight it, we can argue against it, we can say that it is really despicable, or we can say, “Actually, there is a bit of room for social justice work within the model because there's not one campus out there that's not highly conscious of the fact that if they don't do social justice work they will lose their market and market share. So you could play their own game and say, “Right, this has become a stake. If you want to stay relevant and stay sustainable financially, you actually need to incorporate that.”

I remember when I left McGill it was finally embedded into the mission statement, and I said that's visionary. I remember a guy behind the stage said they didn't have a choice. They had a market consultant that told them if they didn’t put it in the mission statement they’re going to start losing their market share in Canada. But that’s where we are, so take advantage of it. I think we can flip this back and say, “You want to work in the UDL environment, we can play the social justice card there and you have to listen to us because at the moment I don't know how long it is going to last, but at the moment it has an impact on resources and on revenue, et cetera. Don't be afraid to use arguments you don't agree with because it’s the ones that might convince people that have a very different agenda than you have.

One of the questions was research-based evidence. This came up lots of times today. I don't think that a commitment to social justice or social equity or inclusion needs to have an evidence base before we start doing it. And as I said, in K-12 we didn’t wait for the evidence before we started doing inclusion, and thank God because we would still be back in the 60s. It doesn't mean that we shouldn't be collecting evidence as we go forward, but I think we have to be very careful of this notion, “I don't want to start this if I don't have evidence.” There's a lot of other things that we do in higher ed that we have no evidence for, but we still do it. So at least that one has values, commitment, and then we can collect the evidence as we go forward.

I think we have to acknowledge that from a methodical perspective and ethical perspective it is hard to collect data on UDL initiatives anyway. Often, people will start talking about running two courses or two halves of courses, one UDL, one not UDL. You can’t do that. You're never going to get ethics clearance on that. You can’t give access to inclusive measures to half your class and not the other half. And if you ran the same course, okay, that would already be problematic. I don’t want to be inclusive this time round, just to get my data. Again, you get ethics. But even if you did, there are so many other variables that you are not controlling and you are also quantifying is it just UDL, is it other things, is it your temperament that semester as you get the course. There are a lot of other things that you are also inherently measuring. We have to be careful.

There are a lot of avenues for a lot of great qualitative work, and I think in social sciences we shouldn't be afraid of qualitative work, and a lot of the rich work that’s starting to appear around UDL is actually qualitative. Simple things like working with student groups who are giving you feedback. Think about this: students are going through a trajectory. They themselves highlight the practices and the courses that really worked for them and what was aligned with their needs.

There’s a lot of great work around phenomenology with students where you could work from a campus and actually collect the data in that sense. Every government wants a link between retention and graduation and UDL. Good luck, because that quantitative data on that kind of scale, how are you again going to isolate a variable and not the others. But I think there are lots of ways that we can meet the first that we have for data and do a lot of really rich, qualitative work. There's a lot of people doing really great phenomenological work around their course with developments, et cetera, and that is really important too. There's a lot of reflection that faculty are doing going through this process about that change of practice and new practice put in place, et cetera. Where we shouldn't be afraid of qualitative work just because it’s qualitative. After all, you know, we are in the field of social sciences and we have to embrace that as well.

So lots of opportunities, but let's not stall things just because we don't have that perfect report that tells us that, yeah, UDL is evidence-based and let’s move forward.

Someone had a question about timeframe. For the timeframe, I would really take it back to that notion of ecological mapping that you do before you begin. I don't think that the timeframe is going to be the same on every campus. I've seen small campuses that are fairly recent in terms of historical development that have moved very, very fast. It is normal. They have different types of collaboration between stakeholders and organisations and much more nimble and fast moving. They move a lot faster than some of the giant universities, giant campuses and some of the historical ones as well. Even in the States they're talking about campuses now of 120,000 students, talking 10 thousand faculty. How are you going to move that fast. It’s going to take you years. Again, it depends on your goals, depends on the mapping and the environment you're working with. I don't know if David has more questions?

DAVID: Yes, thank you. There is probably time for one more online question. We did have quite a good discussion in the room about this question, which is while there may be many stakeholders involved in UDL who is or should be responsible for it?

FREDERIC: So over the many stakeholders, who should be responsible for it? That is a big question for today. Again, I take you back to that notion of ecological analysis. I don’t think, and I’ve reiterated several times today, that there’s a one-size-fits-all. In UDL within a classroom there’s not a one-size-fits-all but in terms of implementation there isn't one size fits all. It depends on the evaluation that you do about the landscape you’re working with. Again, I think that even for me, I've seen with a question I received today, that this notion of always thinking about who is in the centre of that equation and who is moving the drive is maybe limiting and maybe we should be thinking about hive and matrix formation, and clusters and things that are much more creative, and maybe more adapted to 21st century transformational leadership, and how do we get people moving.

There is definitely this thing that sometimes on campuses, it is so big that this notion of ambassadors and matrix formation and spiderweb might work much better because people have more autonomy within each department to move things at their own rhythm with their own resources that they have. That's something that needs to be, again, dependent on the bigger analysis that you do of format. One last one. People are saying - someone asked suggestions for training, courses for academics to align material with UDL.

The answer here - we touched on it a little bit. Because of this hierarchical dichotomies and the difficulties we have in hearing people who are not faculty telling us how to teach, it’s really painful, let me tell you. If you have to do observation for tenure, it is not the nicest thing when you think you are doing things well and somebody says you're not doing that, you're not doing that, you're not doing that. It is painful. We have got to accept that faculty might be really tough. So the best way – and I’ve learned that McGill was really this notion of faculty to faculty – and that involves students – it’s one of the things I described today – having students report back which courses and which specific practices they found useful and were aligned with UDL, and then contacting the faculty. You hit two birds with a stone because faculty are really happy when you tell them, “I’ve got student feedback. They really love this. Would you like to model this for other faculty?” We learned two-minute videos. People have very short attention spans, and they don't have much time for professional development. The shorter the better. You target on one thing. “You are doing this in an excellent way. Can you showcase it to others.” It is really good for them and their tenure track. I think they felt really good. It is feedback that they have tried this, it works. Students are noticing. Other faculty members will notice as well. It is a nice subtle way, I think, that UDL spreads. Don't forget that people sometimes are really afraid to be noticed. I have knocked on doors of faculty and said, “Would you like to showcase this?” And they’ve told me, “No. I do all this and it is really inconspicuous and no-one gives me any shit, so I don't want anyone to notice.”

Don't forget that this is what faculty are working with. Little subtle nuance things that they're not going to get. Open Pandora's box and start all departmental questions about actually make integrity. They will be happy to showcase you a little bit and then to get feedback and be part of the discourse and the promotion. You've got to understand again that the complexity of the lives that they have and the environments that they navigate as well.

Thank you, everyone, online and in the room.

DARLENE: Thank you, everybody, online and also a big thanks to Lee, our captioner. I did try to get him to slow down. I think she was doing an amazing job, so take a rest, Lee. We're going to say goodbye to our online audience. The session will be on ADCET. You can rewatch it, and the PowerPoint from today is up there today as well as the session we had today, the PowerPoint is also there. So the two PowerPoints are up on ADCET now if you want to go to that. We will close off here and then we will say goodbye in the room. Thank you, everybody. It was great to have you all join us. Take care.