REBECCA MORRIS: Hello and welcome, everyone. Thank you for joining us today. My name is Rebecca Morris. I am the Manager of the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, ADCET for short. My pronouns are she/her. I am a woman in my mid ish forties. I have long brown/grey hair and today I'm wearing a black jumper with white dots and I have clear framed glasses on.

This webinar is being live captioned. To activate the captions click the CC button in the toolbar that is located either on the top or the bottom of your screen. We also have captions available via browser, and we will now add the link to the chat box.

ADCET is hosted on Lutruwita, Tasmanian Aboriginal land, and in the spirit of reconciliation ADCET respectfully acknowledges the Lutruwita nations and also recognises the Aboriginal history and culture of the land. And I pay my respects to elders’ past, present and emerging and to the many Aboriginal people that did not make elder status.

I also acknowledge all other countries and lands from participants in this meeting and I welcome any Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people joining this webinar today. Please let us know where you're joining us from in the chat.

Today's webinar, Strategic AF: Practical, tactical, (sometimes) fantastical approaches to equity initiatives is presented by A/Prof Lauren Hansen and Dr Danni Hamilton who will share their toolkit for guiding projects, teams and organisations through complex change in their equity focused work.

Before we begin a few more housekeeping details. This webinar is being live captioned by Donna from Captify.Live and will be recorded. The recording will be available on ADCET in the coming days.

The presentation will run for around 45 to 50 minutes, then at the end there will be 10 minutes or so for questions. Throughout the presentation feel free to use the chat box with us and each other and please remember to choose everyone so that we can all read what you have to say.

Lauren and Danni, like I said, are happy to answer questions at the end. If you have a question you would like asked, please use the Q&A box rather than the chat box. Also, please feel free, and we very much welcome you to use the reaction emojis during the presentation. Let Lauren and Danni know you're out there and following along. Thank you so much Lauren and Danni. I will now hand over to you, Lauren.

LAUREN HANSEN: Thank you so much, Bec. Hi everybody. As Bec said, my name is Lauren Hansen. I am Director of Graduate Employability at Deakin University. I am a pale skinned woman with a light pink short bob. I have green eyes, purple framed glasses and today I'm wearing a lilac shirt with a black cardigan and I use she/her pronouns, and I'm joined today by my beautiful colleague Danni.

DANNI HAMILTON: Thanks Lauren. I'm Acting Director of Learning Design at Deakin University. I have short blonde hair with shaved sides, light skin, blue eyes and fluro green glasses. I'm wearing a white linen shirt and today I'm joining you from Bandung Indonesia where I'm helping to launch our new Deakin Lancaster Indonesia Campus for Deakin, and we are taking ADCET international today.

LAUREN: Excellent. I'm joining from the Wurundjeri land in Melbourne today, so not quite as exciting as Danni is beaming in internationally for us.

We're so excited to talk to you today. And when we were preparing these slides, we wanted to start with an image that we felt like encapsulated us on our slides. The image on the screen is a picture of us at the 2022 HERDSA conference. This was our first presentation together and we are armed with showbags of a tool that we built to share with our roundtable guests. I think at the time our thinking was if nothing else we can bribe them with some goodies.

But we were very nervous. And while in the picture we might look like we're confident and we may sound confident, if we were sharing the outcomes of our practice today then we would be really confident. But today's a little bit different because what we're sharing with you is something we've been working on for the last four years that we've worked together. What we've been doing is refining a language around how we work and that's what we wanted to share with you today. We are feeling a little bit vulnerable in sharing the inner workings of our practice, and even more so because this webinar format means we can't get a sense of who is in the room with us. So as Bec said, please be generous with the reactions. We really do welcome you letting us know thank you for the love heart, awesome. It doesn't all have to be love and thumbs up. We're happy for a Julius Caesar style thumbs down in the gladiatorial ring, if that's what it is. That's totally fine, but just some proof of life would be really helpful as we start to share our practice with you.

DANNI: This session is a reflection on what we've learned from each other, Lauren and I, prior to working with each other and beyond up to now. This is an ongoing peer conversation and collaborative practice that we have together and today we're ready to share our journey with you. We're going to walk you through the tools, approaches and projects that have shaped our work, each one grounded in our commitment to fostering transparency and collaboration to accelerate progress in equity practice, aligning expertise and resources to uncover opportunities and clarify roles, build consensus and share knowledge to strengthen collective impact. You will also encounter a few Hamsenisms today, Our term for "practice wisdom", disguised as nonsense, engineered for getting stuff done. This is serious play, and by sharing our practice we hope to contribute to the equity mission through strategic AF approaches that help us, and hopefully you, get things done.

LAUREN: Thanks, Danni. Over the last few years that we've been working together, we've had a lot of different roles and different job titles. But if you were to ask us what it is that we do, how we would describe ourselves, we would say we are strategic capability builders.

Earlier this year I was presenting at the Student Success Conference with my wonderful colleague David Eckstein, who I know is in the room today, and I was talking about the importance of strategic capability builders for getting equity projects moving. And after the presentation, the amazing Darlene McLennan from ADCET really pressed me on what is this role you're talking about? What does this mean? What do they do? And I promised her I would give her a position description, that I would make one for her, and I never got back to her. So if Darlene is watching, this is for you.

On the screen is a copy of a position description that we've put together for what a strategic capability builder does. We've had a little bit of fun with it, but ultimately how we see this role is somebody who can translate strategy into practice, but also use practice to inform strategy. And the way we do this is by taking a practice led approach, which means a lot less talk and a lot more action. We learn by creating things with each other and in this way we build the capability of people in our teams and then we increase organisational capacity to be able to support our students better.

To do this job, we need to know how to look after people in this complex space. We need to be able to read the room, which obviously is very difficult for us in this webinar, but we also need to be able to scan the environment for opportunities, but also for the threats that can be out there to these really important projects too.

We need to be persuasive. We have to be influential, especially when we don't have authority. And we also have to be a little bit sneaky from time to time, and we're going to share some of the ways that we're a bit sneaky with you today. But at all times we are hyperfocused on meaningful, sustainable impact for a more equitable higher education sector.

Now, often the folks who lead strategic projects will be subject matter experts. And I don't want to speak on behalf of Danni, but I am not an equity expert. I'm also not an expert in graduate employability, which is possibly a career limiting thing to say, given my role, but what I will say is Danni and I are experts in getting stuff done. And we argue that strategic projects do need to be led by strategic capability builders who have the skillset and the knowledge to be able to harness the expertise that exist in our institutions and in our sector and get things moving.

Now, that brings us to our first Hamsenism because a strategic capability builder didn't exist until we decided to call it that, and then we made a position description that made it real.

So our first Hamsenism is name it and claim it. And this was a gift from my PhD supervisor, Melissa Petrakis at Monash University, because she was a very wise woman and she said to me, "Lauren, when you give things a name people think it's a real thing and it suddenly can get traction."

So we've used this quite a lot, haven't we, Danni, in our work. By naming and defining your work, you get to frame it as you see it and this can help you to seed your ideas and your projects and approaches in your institution and beyond. A really nice example of this was a couple of years ago some colleagues and I redeveloped the embedded career education curriculum to promote the power of relevant paid work for students while they're studying, and we called this the Stepping Stone Curriculum Framework. And because it had a name, people across the institution, and particularly leadership, were able to point to it. This is the approach we take. We use the Stepping Stones approach. We have a Stepping Stone Curriculum Framework. Because words have power and if people have a name that they can then latch on to and spread the word for other people, it really helps to get traction. It's also pretty cool when it comes back to you and you can have a bit of a giggle and go that was something I made up. But they're not made up. The project was real, the work was real, but by giving it a name it helps people to be able to spread that word for you.

We're also going to ask for a little bit of audience participation today. For the Real Housewives fans, you may recognise this little gif from Sutton which is iconic where she repeatedly, in her southern accent, said name them, name them. So we're going to invite you guys to spot where we have named and claimed something, and whether you want to use reactions, or whether you want to pop a Sutton gif into the chat, call out where you see we've maybe named and claimed something today.

Danni, let's talk a little bit more about how we work.

DANNI: I just saw Ange is here, so this is for you. Speaking of naming, how can we claim to be equity practitioners if we are not open, open with ourselves about what we're here to achieve, open with others to share the work and advance each others' cause? I think of it as a series of embedded spheres with the open practitioner at the centre, working open is about how you approach your work and your life. It's shaped by your ethics, your beliefs and your capabilities. But it's also bounded by your role and your context, what your institution allows, expects and enables.

The open practices that you adopt develop or engage with, they might be task specific, like creating an OER Ange this one is for you or they can be how you go about coordinating a team, how you go about building a community, or simply the way you prioritise the people in your weekly calendar.

By sharing our tools and approaches today, we're sharing our practices and articulating exactly what makes them open and more about that later. So there's a boundary space here that doesn't limit the practices of open, they shape them.

Even when you move to a different role in a different area you will carry your practices with you. This is what it means to have a practice of openness; a personal practice is a life's pursuit. It's made up of all the practices you accumulate along the way, or some of them I accumulated alongside Lauren. In the words of Charles Dickens, your practice is your portable property. You refine it, you hone it, you build upon it, but you carry it with you everywhere you go because it's yours. Practice never happens in isolation. It's shaped by our institutional structures, the cultures, and yes our strategies, and what holds it altogether is a philosophy of becoming open. So every day we ask ourselves as a person, the me, with others the we, and within our institutions and beyond the us, what can I do within the conditions of possibility available to me right now to progress the equity mission.

Sometimes doing this work means putting the personal aside and focusing on the mission. It's about asking what does the project need from me? What do my colleagues need from me? What does higher education need from me? It's about having a service or a collective mentality, and the truth is that can land you in some pretty undignified situations.

It might mean that you have to say yes to things you would rather say no to, work with or for people you would prefer not to, progress projects that you might philosophically disagree with. People might be unkind to you and you might not always show up as your best self either. But if you're being engaged in ethical work and you're thinking holistically about progressing the mission, the bigger picture is always what needs to guide your steps and resilience is core and fundamental because the indignity is part of the process of getting stuff done.

So this framing has helped Lauren and I focus on the work even when it's messy, uncomfortable and complex because ultimately it's not about us, it's about what we're building together. Lauren, over to you.

LAUREN: Thank you, Danni. Danni made this comment to us we were chatting one day and she said, "Lauren, the indignity is just part of the journey", and I loved it so much and I did say we need to put it on T shirts. So we've managed to do that virtually today and one day we'll really get them on T shirts.

I wanted to cover off some of the foundations of open projects that Danni and I have learnt over the years, quite frankly through trial and error, of the things that we've learnt are really, really important to make explicit at the beginning of our projects. These are things that we might assume people understand, but it's always really good to have an ongoing conversation. Firstly, we need to have a really strong shared vision of not just what we're trying to do, but why, and this is bringing in that ethical mission that we all feel particularly strongly in the equity space of why this is so important to do it, but what's equally important in our projects is how. Because we work in a practice led way it's a little bit different. It's a little bit risky. So we need to make sure everybody has a shared vision and is on board.

We also need to really cover off governance and who has authority in decision making. It's not always the project lead, by the way. It can be different people at different stages depending on what's required of the project, who has expertise. So we really need to understand who gets to make the decision here.

Roles and responsibilities need to be clarified and constantly adjusted as the project evolves. People need to understand the commitment that they're making and that may change as the project matures and their roles change as well. Life happens and people are less able to commit as they were before.

Project scope is really important. No one is immune to stepping on toes, especially not me and Danni. When you're building a project you can be unaware of other projects or things you might be encroaching on. It's really important to understand what your project is doing specifically and stay in your lane, but equally you need to understand and stay aligned to the original intention. We work with a lot of passionate people. We have a lot of ideas and it's really easy for projects to snowball into all of these other things you want to get to as well and it can be really difficult to bring it back to what is that original intention. Great ideas, let's park them for later. Let's see who else can do them, but let's stick to what we've committed to on this project.

We use the term "affordances" and Danni will talk about this in a little more detail but essentially, this is what do we have to work with, both within the project but also outside of the project. Danni has a beautiful saying about emptying your pockets. When people come together to do a project, we all need to empty our pockets on the table and see who has what that we can use for the project. Somebody might have a paper clip, somebody has a ball of fluff and we can McGyver something out of that together. It's really important to take the time to figure out what we've got to work with and where we can find other things outside of the project.

Communication is a big one for me and the key messaging around the project. We've already talked about name them and thanks to the folks already putting stuff into the chat and recognising where we've named it. Thank you for playing along. We appreciate it. When we have clear messaging about the projects, and particularly some of the projects, creative projects that Danni and I tend to work on, you've got to be really careful about who speaks for it and when. If that messaging gets out too early, you can get an instant no from people because we haven't had the time to explain it properly. It's really hard to walk back and know. It's a lot easier to plan out how you're going to deal with your stakeholders, communicate this messaging out so you are able to tell the story that you want to tell and have that influence.

Everything we're sharing with you today is predicated on the idea that you've got to do the work. So we've got lots of sneaky ways to seed ideas and get things happening, but if the work is not there and the work is not good there's no point in doing it. So we insist on accountability in our projects. You've got to do the work. It's got to be quality work. People need to own their mistakes. I think Danni and I probably make four or five a day, Mistakes are totally fine in this way of working, but you've got to make amends, whether that's to relationships or things you might have broken in a program and I can think of several examples where I've done that. It's important we have that personal and team accountability.

Finally, we need to be aware of the capability we have in the team. Do we have the expertise to do this? Who are our experts within the group and making sure that they are able to speak to their areas of expertise? But if we don't have it in the group, where can we find it outside of the group and how do we then learn from those folks by bringing them into the project, either whether they're fully in the project or consulting? But always looking for where is the expertise, and we work in universities so there is expertise galore.

This brings us to our next Hamsenism, which is the metaphor of the bus. When it comes to working openly we're always asking the question who's on the bus? Are they on the bus? Really, this is useful language for us to figure out who we can and can't work openly with. We don't have to work openly with everybody. Not everybody has to be on the bus, but we need to know who is safe to work with openly.

So we only want to work with people, we only want to work openly with people who want to work openly with us, who choose to be there. In this slide we've chosen the graphic of Ms Frizzle from the Magic School Bus, those of you who remember, because we felt like this was a representation of what it's like to work on some of our projects. You don't necessarily know where you're going but you certainly don't end up where you thought you were going to be. It's a lot of fun and seatbelts are usually required.

When it comes to people being on the bus, it's great when they're on the bus, but we also need to make sure that people are comfortable on there. Sometimes someone might have their hand on the handbrake, so we need to understand what is it going to take for them to let go of that handbrake and let this progress? How do we work with that? Someone might be grappling for the steering wheel or back seat driving. How do we go back to our governance conversations about it's not your time to drive the bus, it's somebody else's, and where do they need to sit on the bus and maybe who do they need to sit with so they will feel comfortable to be able to continue on working openly with us. It's a constant negotiation.

Sometimes we have to change our bus route because somebody is standing in the middle of the road where we need to go, and so we can change the bus route but we don't change the destination of where we're trying to get to.

We are not perfect people, we're not always kind, and sometimes we do think about maybe who needs to go under the wheels of the bus. But Danni, we do try and stay out of that negative space, don't we, and navigate as best we can?

So what we wanted to do now is jump into our lolly shop, our candy store of goodies for you today and start to share some of these tools and strategies now that we've talked about some of the foundations of the ways that we work. Our first area we wanted to look at is how do we foster transparency and collaboration to accelerate progress. First thing I wanted to talk about is having a shared understanding of collaboration. I'll admit that collaboration has been a dirty word to me because we assume that everybody means the same thing when they say we're going to collaborate together, but we rarely actually mean the same thing and it can get us into trouble. Danni, just the other day you asked me if you were allowed to start using the word "collaborate" again because you really liked it, and I'd pretty much banned it from our conversations, but we are prepared to introduce it back into our vernacular because one of the things that we love to use is Salmon's taxonomy of collaboration which is on this slide. This is a wonderful framework to help us consider what we mean by collaboration and be clear when we start a project about what we mean by collaboration. And it's the kinds of methods that are appropriate to use, whether we're in a high trust or a low trust environment.

In low trust environments, or when you're trying to build trust in a new program or project, starting with reflection and dialogue is a really great starting point because it helps us to share our ideas and ways of working and not necessarily needing to produce an output together. So it's a great place to start.

When you've developed trust or you're in a mid-trust environment it can be really effective if people are working separately but then come together to share a shared output. That can be through a review process or through having ownerships of certain aspects of the output.

But when we get to high trust environments, or what we would consider that working openly environment, sequential and synergistic collaboration really allows us to harness the potential of all the expertise that we have in the room, and I feel like this is the perfect example of that saying. The whole is more than the sum of its parts. The key to working with this taxonomy from our point of view is to not engage in these high trust collaboration methods when you're in a low trust environment. That's when people's noses get out of joint, people get hurt feelings, and ultimately a project will stall because people are arguing over whose voice needs to be heard the most in that space.

But similarly, if you use some of those low trust methods in a high trust environment or a really open environment, you can miss out on all the really good stuff you might have been able to get from that high functioning team or project.

The tools that we're going to share with you today and the approaches enable some of these kinds of collaboration. And Danni, you have one of our very early tools to share around how we collaborate.

DANNI: Yeah. So I'm going to introduce you to one of our favourite tools for collaboration, the broken prototype. It was our first project working together, wasn't it, Lauren, and I used it in a project with nine equity focused students as partners who were asked to review the Deakin inclusive teaching toolkit website. Instead of asking for feedback on the website as it was live and it being abstract and open to interpretation, we really wanted to keep things focused. So we mocked up web pages, adapted from existing content, and added a few Easter eggs to keep things playful, things that were obviously wrong so it really opened up those students' engagement. And also, nobody's feelings were going to get hurt. That's somebody's labour. We felt like you create a nice piece of distance from a broken prototype, it's up for grabs. We asked these students are you buying what we're selling. We're saying this is inclusive practice at Deakin, we want academics to do it, but do you want them to do this? It was a very simple provocation.

From this project and these robust dialogues that students got into, we got six recommendations to uplift the toolkit and they were documented in the report. I was never able to uplift the toolkit to the degree that the students had indicated as much as I would have loved to it got the green light, just didn't get a chance to do it sometimes projects happen that way but I have drawn on this work in my practice ever since. These things about the aesthetics that students cared about, accessibility, engagement, the simplicity of what they were looking for us to give them, the credibility of the work, multi-modality they really cared about, and these are pillars when I'm thinking how do I design things with students.

Through this process, Lauren and I learned that broken prototype approach works across all trust levels and project types, and it invites critique, fosters engagement and helps us build better, more rigorous, transparent outcomes. In its ultimate state four years later, we're still using it every which way but Sunday, broken prototypes. We've used it recently in the FutureFocus GenAI program. It's an initiative that brings together seven disciplinary partnerships that bring senior academics together with their industry and professional peers to have a conversation about GenAI's impact on their fields. It responds to TEQSA principle 1 about future capabilities.

The whole community is a community of 40 people. It spans nine disciplinary perspectives. It has 11 industry partners involved in it, so it's quite a big project. And we've been in active conversation since July last year. The goal is to create recommendations for industry engaged, AI evolved, course wide curriculum transformation, because when industry and academia collaborate, we're not just preparing students, we're shaping the future of work which is an equity mission. Last May when we began documenting these conversations and the extensive documentation process that went alongside it, this was all distilled into 33 thematic provocations that were articulated as like a little tag line and then fully articulated in paragraphs. So it was quite a lot of data. We fed them into Copilot, generated a set of broken prototype recommendations, and they were deliberately imperfect, designed to provoke critique of our community. We are high trust, synergistic community. We had Phil Dawson join us as the newest member. That's our beautiful cradle Phil Dawson, the world's most highest cited assessment higher education researcher big plug for Phil there and we together reviewed, adjusted and amended these broken prototype recommendations to ensure that the outcomes of this project reflect the real needs and real expertise that has happened through this community.

Our work is for the graduates of today, tomorrow and the future, and we will deliver these discipline specific recommendations and the collaborative ones in October this year and will probably begin starting the process of uplifting units next year, won't we, Lauren?

But how are we doing this? We do it through open alliance approach, another one of our Hamsenisms. It starts with a shared culture, a commitment to how we work together. It's strengthened by a shared vision, a clear sense of where we're headed and it's sustained by shared interests and motivations, why the work matters to each of us. These alliances are governed by three explicit principles, not one, not two, but all three always together that guide how we collaborate, make decisions and stay aligned. And when these elements are in place we move from cooperation to strategic partnership. And that is mutually beneficial, ethical and action-oriented alliance, which I think we've covered off on so much of our conversation today. So Lauren, what does this look like in practice?

LAUREN: Thanks, Danni. At the beginning of last year the graduate employment team entered into an open alliance with our equity and inclusion team here at Deakin to build an equity capable careers service. So we wanted to make sure that we were equity capable, that we were able to embed universal design into everything that we do and we knew we didn't have the expertise to do it.

So in building this alliance, we were able to set up a series of professional development engagements where we weren't reinventing the wheel because this was already equity and inclusion's offering. They tailored it to our context. We began working together on a range of projects, working with their mentors who do the outreach work in schools and supporting them in their career development.

So there's a range of different ways that we fully integrated our work and theirs. To progress this project and to really get buy in from the team. We had a SharePoint site that the team created. This is another way of making things really tangible for folks. It was a home that had a workshop recordings are on there. The workshops are compulsory for the team so there's very strong leadership support for this. The SharePoint site has the recordings, it has resources. Again, not reinventing the wheel. These are resources from Deakin, from ADCET, from a range of different places, but they've been curated beautifully initially by Tarryn Attwell and also Jess Avery, who I think are in the room with us today, so shout out to those folks.

There's been a lot of work from the team to really make sure we're integrated between the two teams.

The team engagement has been incredible. They have posted on we have a Teams site. They're posting how they're embedding this into their practice sorry, spoiler alert there. They've been embedding this into their practice, whether it's through making slides accessible or changing induction processes. But one of the things, Danni, that you and I do a lot of is use fun and humour to keep people engaged. But the other thing we do as well is reflect back to folks the impact of the work that they're doing because it can be really difficult when you're in the trenches to actually be able to understand what you're doing and how incredible it is.

So at the end of last year we had a celebration event at our end of year retreat. We invited our friends from equity and inclusion, as well as a couple of other partners along, and we created a fun musical video. We love to poke fun at ourselves, but it was a gift both to the graduate employment team as well as to the project partners and allies. We have fun, as I said. This year is Pete Olszewski who we work with around the HEPP funding from the equity and inclusion team, amongst a bunch of other things. His team particularly loved this Scrooge McDuck version of him on his mountain of HEPP money and did ask for it for their Zoom backgrounds. But we also gave away the golden toilet award, and we can have a glass of wine virtual glass of wine later and I'll explain the provenance of that one. That went out to our equity and inclusion team.

But in the room that day were other teams from student services and from alumni. And what they said to our boss was, "How do we get to work with this team? They are so engaged." I like to think it's because they want the golden toilet award, but I actually think it's really about how engaged our team are. But I will say it was $35 very well spent.

Let's jump back into our candy store for our next round of tools and approaches, Danni. In this one we're talking about how we align expertise and resources and uncover opportunities to clarify roles, and this is taking a bit of a deeper dive into affordances.

DANNI: Yeah. When we talk about open educational affordances, we need to think about everyone; students, academics and the university as a whole. Affordance isn't just about tools or resources, it's about understanding what the environment makes possible to achieve. This includes cost, what's feasible within our constraints; expertise, the experience we can bring or that we can access; It's about context, what the environment can support and most importantly what it can sustain, which we want to build to last. That's what it's all about. This approach means we don't work in isolation, we work in alliance which we've already spoken about. We build on what's already available, what's been done or being done and we know where the expertise lives and we don't try and fabricate it.

I suppose an example of this is the accessibility champions, Lauren, which was our original affordance based approach. Recruiting champions from all four faculties at Deakin University, I developed a position description, I negotiated workload support with their managers, taking a fraction of their time for each of the champions. I pitched accessibility specialisation as a strategic capability at all levels of leadership something every team should have, it was essential. And I pitched it that this was a network the whole university could draw on. I even offered to fund professional development. Again, there's that HEPP money well spent. Look at what good work HEPP does.

Affordance in this context meant finding the right people, recognising expertise, but in this case we recruited for passion, not expertise. We felt if we have passionate accessibility advocates, we need to uplift them and upskill their expertise. We wanted to create opportunities for people that hadn't been seen in the University till now. It also meant acknowledging people have limited capacity and it was about designing from the start that people have very little time to give but they're very passionate so let's make space for that.

We started with just eight accessibility champions. They're still collaborating and doing their thing today four years later. Each brings expertise in areas brought initially across functional team, the original champions had expertise in visual design, learning design, communications, administration and educational technology and together they formed a passionate community of advocates.

We organised targeted professional learning to help them grow and connect as a network, and what they produced was culture change at our university. I like to think the accessibility champions made accessibility sexy at Deakin. It became visible in teaching and learning. And what's beautiful about the accessibility champions is that they earned three ADCET awards and their advocacy contributed to another 15 ADCET awards recognitions. We really lifted above our weight there.

The accessibility champions created the everyday accessibility basics. They were zero entry accessibility starters to help academics begin their accessibility journey at Deakin. These resources now underpin Deakin's accessibility policy setting the minimum and expected standards for unit site design. One of the most mutually beneficial things that was done here was commit to producing an annual report we talked about reports before of celebrating people's work. It provided proof of impact for managers who supported the champion and gave the work allocation. For the champions themselves, it was an advocacy tool. Look at the powerful project I'm involved in and what my part of it was. And for leadership who saw the strategic objectives being met through this project. It was ethical, high trust, action oriented, and we normalised doing nothing some weeks, and made it okay to say, "I didn't do anything", because it wasn't about performative progress, it was about making things happen, doing things and building something that lasts with the time that people had available to them. So Lauren, who should we be aware of when we're doing these projects?

LAUREN: It does bring us to our next Hamsenism, which is that we do want people to explore and to learn, but we do need to beware of the dabbler. What makes somebody a dabbler is that they claim expertise without commitment to the mission, without deep engagement with the topic or others in the field, and they often, because of that, have limited capability. But it doesn't stop them reinventing the wheel and presenting that as novel, and we've all been to conferences where that's happened, or speaking over actual experts. I'm thinking about many of you who are in the room who have expertise in this space and have probably experienced this. This is why I like to make it clear I'm not an expert in many of the topics in which I run projects in.

But the dabblers also typically are the first we use the term they're the first piggies with their snouts in the trough, the first people to take up opportunities for funding for projects, for recognition, because often our experts are too busy doing the work to be able to engage in many of those things.

And so we take our job as strategic capability builders very, very seriously. We don't just bring together experts, we take it seriously to elevate them, to ensure that they have the opportunities to speak, and this shorthand of identifying a dabbler early, it's so that we can work with the dabbler and try and bring them into the fold, get them to buy in to the mission, learn from the experts and allow the experts to speak.

We can all be dabblers from time to time. None of us are beyond being a dabbler. And it's not a fatal flaw, but we really want to be able to spot it early and extend that invitation to join this equity army that we're all trying to create. It's important to be mindful of those folks. We want people to come and explore, but we're very big on honouring expertise, aren't we, Danni? Absolutely.

DANNI: Absolutely. It's all about it.

LAUREN: This brings us back into our lolly shop again. This is about how we build consensus and share knowledge to strengthen this collective impact that we're going to have with this army that we're all building. Danni, let's talk a little bit how we build some of these open communities.

DANNI: Yeah. Building open communities, it's no more about build it and they will come something for them. Go to where the work is being done and who is doing it and celebrate them. Make it action and process oriented. Come back to the foundations of open projects. Use distributed leadership models where you can, but operations are built into workload and organisational planning so people are not being taken advantage of. Create an experience where people can come as they are when they can. This means make it snackable. Engagements can be standalone, but also normalise doing nothing because every little bit helps and we're all passionate, we all want to pitch in.

LAUREN: And so we've instantiated an open community in a number of ways, but one we wanted to share with is the action learning group model that we have first instantiated it as a graduate employability action learning group, or the GEALG, as my team like to troll me with because they know I hate it. This was really an evolution of the inclusive education community of practice that Danni had built around that champions model. So much of our work, as Danni said at the beginning, is our portable practice, and we're constantly building on something that one or both of us have done before.

So the point of this group really was we had a WIL community of practice work integrated learning and earning kept talking about WIL, WIL, WIL, and I was determined that people were going to start talking about graduate employability as a much broader concept.

So this was about building trust in the space, bringing people together in a pretty complex environment. There are so many people that come together to support our students to build their graduate capabilities.

So the action learning group was designed to support this by being action oriented. We aren't just talking about our practice. This is about learning about our practice through practice together. And so we do this using a flipped classroom approach, which means that we have a monthly meeting, it's in people's calendars and they have something to look at or read or watch before the meeting. It's usually only about 10 minutes. That means we can move straight into action. So we don't have a presentation or guest speaker. Somebody from the community facilitates, but we are straight into activity, into discussion, into peer sharing. And at the end of the session we have an action pack to help them translate this into actual changes in their practice.

It encourages folks to collaborate. This is a very activist stance. We're wanting to make sure we elevate graduate employability as a practice area, both for our students' benefit, but also for staff so they can build meaningful careers in this space. So this allows for people to collaborate outside of the group, to go and find a shared point of interest and create a project or work together on a practice problem.

Danni hosts an open practice showcase, which is fantastic, people can come and share their work. And this community has been it's coming to the end of our third year. There are other examples of it in the University and it's a really great model to bring together strategy and practice. So we have strong leadership support. Our DVCA has opened our program of events every year, and our Pro Vice Chancellor Jamie Mustard attends every session as well. So that proximity to leadership for folks, but also for our leadership to hear from practice is really important.

Danni, you have brought community together to form consensus, which is a very different approach.

DANNI: Yeah. So I'm going to talk about the community consultation and consensus building approach. Snaps for Danni and her naming and claiming. The project brief was simple on this one. Create an assessment task template that's consistent across the University, includes all essential information, and is accessible, logical and easy to follow. Something academics can use confidently and helps students feel less anxious about what's expected of them.

But the reality was far from simple. There were countless stakeholders, each with strong and often conflicting requirements. So I developed the community consultation and consensus building approach. We started by synthesising existing templates across all the four faculties into one. That was the broken prototype. Then we invited a broad and unfiltered critique because no one's feelings were going to get hurt about a template Frankensteined together from everything else. We had multiple rounds of review from diverse stakeholder groups. We had a core working group, but we also included leaders from academic, governance and standards and CRADLE, the Disability Resource Centre, language and learning advisors, the library and, of course, students who were involved at three key stages of this development.

In total you are seeing in the report more than 60 Deakin academics and professional staff authentically contributed to this critical review process, and the whole project was underpinned by a peer reviewed research paper with students as partners at Deakin who talked about what their dreams and desires for assessment design was. So it was built for students from the start.

This equity first approach resulted in a template that's accessible to both academics and students. Like all consensus work, it was about compromise, but I believe we created something beautiful, user friendly and practical. It's going to be available university wide in trimester 3. Oh my goodness. It's a testament to what's possible when we build with and not for our community. Lauren, over to you.

LAUREN: Thank you, Danni. We're going to finish up now with our last Hamsenism, and that is when we work openly sometimes it can be a little bit difficult to know if we're effecting real change. But you know when something is working when the pelicans and seagulls attack.

Let me unpack this for you. Pelican behaviour is someone who, for reasons known only to them, attempts to stall or derail or undermine your project. We're not talking about genuine stakeholder critique or concerns; we're talking about those armchair experts, like the Waldorf and Statler in the Muppets hurling their opinions at you when your project is already underway.

Now, the reason we call them pelicans is because of this video that I found, because I'm chronically online, and I found and sent to Danni because I thought it was hilarious, because it's a pelican trying to eat a capybara, the poor noble capybara. As you can see, the capybara is quite unbothered by this and they're getting on with the job.

So we use this metaphor because it's really useful for us to remind us that a pelican cannot eat a capybara and we just need to keep moving. The video is ridiculous and that's what we have to remind ourselves of. Don't let people sniping at us throw us off our game. We are moving forward, we've done our due diligence on our governance at the beginning of the project, but it's also why we need the T shirts around the indignity as part of the journey because it's not fun to be swiped at by pelicans all the time.

Seagull behaviour is a little bit different. At the beach, a seagull will swoop in, they'll steal your chips and they might poop on your head as well. The same thing can happen when your projects start to get recognition. We want to share our work. We want people to adopt it, and that's the spirit of open. But that doesn't mean that things shouldn't be attributed either. It's important that we keep an eye out for seagulls because, again, it's our responsibility to the people that we work with to ensure they are properly recognised for their contribution.

You might have noticed one of the things we've started doing with this again, we can all be seagulls and pelicans, we're not immune to this and this shorthand helps us understand who we need to be worried about and who we don't need to be worried about but you might have noticed we've included citations on each of these slides. The reason we do that, whether it's an internal publication or it's a roundtable that we've done or it is an actual publication, the point is that they act as a signpost to folks that this is somebody's intellectual labour and, yes, we're sharing it with you, yes, we want you to use it, but it needs to be attributed. That doesn't need to be a citation, it can just be acknowledgement of where those ideas came from. When we work openly we really do need to be aware of the pelicans and the seagulls, and we have fun with that language as well which is what we always try to do.

On that note, we'll leave you with this image of me with a pelican trying to attack me looking very unbothered, and Danni poor Danni has had her chips stolen and being pooped on and is very unhappy about it. We'll open up to questions and comments but also the provocation of today we wanted to share with you how we work. We've shown you ours, we would love for you guys to show us yours. Danni, did you have any final thoughts?

DANNI: No, I've just been watching everyone with their own Hamsenisms in the chat. It's very exciting. Rebecca, I think we'll call you in to manage the questions if there are any.

REBECCA: Thank you both so much. That was really wonderful. You've done a really comprehensive job there of encapsulating the complexities and challenges to do with equity projects and having those open project approach to pushing equity agendas. I've got a lot to process myself. I feel a little bit exposed by the dabbler. It's hard to know sometimes whether you're a dabbler or expert, but I do feel a little bit exposed. And there's a couple of things there that I have questions about.

LAUREN: If I could let you know, we do have a term I often use for myself, which I'm a high end dabbler, which is kind of that in between where you've developed some really good working knowledge on some things that's not a pure dabbler, but you're in that safer space, but you're still acknowledging you aren't an expert in something. Feel free that it's okay to have a little bit of dabbling.

REBECCA: Thank you for clarifying. I will turn over to the audience before I start asking my questions because mine is to do with what's your advice when you find yourself surrounded by dabblers. But that's okay. I'll turn over to the audience before I get into that. We did have a question in the Q&A from Sue. In the broken prototype did the students know about the Easter eggs?

DANNI: No, they didn't. It was really just a matter of we wanted them to come as they were with their authentic no, I don't think I did. It's a while ago now, but I think it was really just I wanted them to have something to hold on to, that they could immediately go that's wrong, I don't like that. It wasn't really necessary that they know that there was something wrong with it, it was just that it was an invitation and there was a low hanging fruit for them to get started and get their teeth into. It could have, though. I think everything has its moment when you're working out what do you need people to if you needed them to focus on something, you probably would, but no, I wanted them to come open to that process and feel empowered to say things, and give them something that they could argue with immediately straight out the gate. Normalising the critique, I think, was the thing with the students.

LAUREN: I think we noticed the difference between that when we used it with FutureFocus GenAI where we had senior academics and industry in the room that didn't need such an invitation to come in to critique, much more comfortable with critique. So we didn't need to have Easter eggs in there, we just needed to say, "Look, it's not broken. We know" sorry, "It's broken, we know it's not right", but we didn't have to have prompts to get them to engage in the same way. So I think it depends on who you're working with as to whether you need some of those supports in there.

REBECCA: Thank you. That's fantastic. We've also been asked for a complete list of the Hamsenisms, but I think Darren has done a pretty good job of collating them and putting them in the chat. Thanks, Darren.

LAUREN: Can I say nothing would make us happier than if we hear out in the wild someone say, "Oh my God, they were such a pelican." Honestly, if that comes back to us, my life will be complete, guys.

REBECCA: I'll keep you updated. I'm sure it's going to join the ADCET team pretty quickly. Yvonne has written, I'm keen to better understand how your action learning group model connects practice with strategy. Are there opportunities for practitioners to influence strategic planning, funding allocation and governance? If so, how?

LAUREN: Not necessarily funding, but absolutely strategy. I'm responsible for the graduate employability strategy along with my boss, PVC graduate employment, and we are in that room, and so we are listening to practice at all times. Also I'm working in the practice as well. So it is a very close to practice approach in terms of informing strategy. We also share the strategy quite early, we get feedback. So it's a constant conversation and negotiation between practice and strategy in that group. However, that is the central graduate employability strategy and each of the faculties are then going to also have some structural things about how funding happens and how things get rolled out, which we don't have control over. We do have some influence in those spaces, but ultimately it's allowing us to really understand what's happening in practice. So we never want to build a strategy that doesn't work for practitioners, ultimately. That's really how that is happening in that space, is really just making sure that we're in that constant conversation. Poor Danni is in a hotel room at the moment and I think housekeeping has just turned up. Your room service?

DANNI: It's the second time.

REBECCA: That's fantastic. I love that. Can I just ask you, because that ties into a question that I wanted to ask, because there is often that divide, isn't there, between the practice and the strategies. And as equity practitioners we have a particular agenda working with students and it's very much based on the need that arises from the students that we're dealing with. But then when we're trying to communicate that agenda or that need to higher management or executive, there's often that divide and often the equity practitioners, I guess, don't feel particularly empowered to communicate or to get that buy in. I'm just wondering what your No. 1 advice to equity practitioners would be when trying to move a project again, I can answer my own question that naming it, but how do you what would be your advice from that point of where we see practice that needs to happen to start building up towards that strategic change?

LAUREN: Danni, did you want to go first or do you want me to

DANNI: I think this is really your question because you are the expert at this. This is what you do really well. I suppose my instinctive response is what does the University or the organisation want, because that's the due north? And if your work is underwritten by those important strategy documents and you're connecting it through your division, then you're standing on solid ground when you're doing the advocacy piece.

But then there's all of these other layers to it as well and it's very much around working relationally with people and building connections and leveraging what's around you. I think, Lauren, you're much better equipped at that one.

LAUREN: Well, I think absolutely what Danni said. Firstly, strategy documents, policies and procedures, they are so powerful. If you can point out that hey, our strategy says we're going to do this, but in practice it's not happening for these students, but then also go to the policy. Are we not fulfilling our requirements according to the policies and procedures? That's really powerful with leaders. If we're not compliant, that's a really big thing. But then I think also giving them solutions as well that ultimately the best solutions for leadership are ones that don't cost them anything. So that's where affordances come in. What do we have available to us to help to do this? Who else is this a problem for that we could partner with? I think leaders always love to see that kind of efficiency, dare I say it, of okay, we've got this challenge for students. Who else has got this challenge for students? How can we work together with our existing resources, programs or services, or what just needs to be tweaked a little bit or how can our programs come together?

I think it's in those smart ways where we're not having to create a new program or new resource or new process that's always really attractive to leadership. So sometimes giving them a bit of a ready-made solution. This is where you can also incorporate the broken prototype, by the way, because you can give them a ready-made solution with a clear thing that's broken and they will go, "No, that thing's broken, you need to fix that. Everything else is fine, but just fix that one thing." It's like great, because we knew that needed to be fixed but you've just agreed to everything else. That's the sneaky bit we said earlier.

It's trying to be as smart as possible about things, align with strategy, as Danni said. What is it they're interested in? What is stuff they have to do in policy and procedure, but what is the most cost-effective thing that's going to work in this instance? It's not always the most perfect thing, and sometimes it's inch by inch you move them along.

The other thing we do is show, don't tell. You can tell people till you're blue in the face you need something and they won't understand it. If you build it and you've got something to show them, and then all of a sudden they're like, "We need this everywhere." It's like great, fantastic. Sometimes you've just got to build something where the going is good, where somebody wants to work with you on it, and then people can see it. Not everybody has the vision to understand when you're trying to explain to them what it is. That's also another opportunity, to just do a proof of concept as well. That's worked quite well for us, hasn't it, Danni, in the past?

DANNI: I was thinking that alliance with Pete and the team at diversity, equity and inclusion was incredibly powerful and it played very, very well with senior leaders as a model. It's the visibility of the thing and being able to communicate it up, down, sideways with everyone, banging the drum, the reports, all of that boring governance stuff, affordability.

REBECCA: Thank you. That's such great advice. I have one more question. I'm mindful of the time but I'm desperate to ask this one because I was very much struck by when you said indignity is part of the journey, and it ties into this as well because equity comes with a lot of responsibility, right? Sometimes we can get things wrong or things can be a major flop, we can fail miserably. The goal posts move, agendas change and it's very complex. How do you strategically navigate those failures personally and professionally? If you can be super quick in your response, I just would really love to know about how you approach those failures.

LAUREN: We cry.

DANNI: Yeah, we have a cry. We have a very powerful partnership so we support each other. I think having a bestie that understands your practice and you're sharing it, but I would also say it's about being firm in your commitment and knowing what you're here for. And I think when you're really solid in your project and you've done all the underground work that no one is ever going to thank you for or even know it happened. I think both Lauren, I'm going to speak for you as well your practice is meticulous. We don't start anything unless we've done all the underground work and still it will fail. But at least when it fails you go I did everything I could to try and make this a success, so now all I've got to do is learn from the mistake and carry it forward to make my practices better.

LAUREN: Which is another Hamsenism we could have included, which is no failures, only findings. We're always learning from what it is. And because it's a portable practice toolkit, the project might have failed, but we will have added things to our practice toolkit along the way. Sometimes it fails in one space and works in another. I think we're very kind to each other and to ourselves and very committed to the mission, I think is what we would also say.

REBECCA: Wonderful. Thank you so much to both of you, Lauren and Danni. And thank you to our captioner Donna.

LAUREN: Sorry, Donna.

REBECCA: An email will be sent to you all when the recording of this webinar is available on the ADCET website. Please feel free to share this with your colleagues. We ask that you complete our short survey on this webinar and sign up to our newsletter. These links will now be added to the chat box. Please save the date for our upcoming webinar, the AIS Framework, operationalising accessibility within student support services, which will be on 8 October. Further details will also be in the chat box. Thanks everyone and see you next time.