DARREN BRITTEN: Good morning, everyone, and welcome to this first session of the UDL Symposium. We are so glad that you could join us here today. My name is Darren Britten, and I am the National Assistive Technology Officer with the Australian Disability Clearinghouse on Education and Training, and I am joining you today from the lands of the Wurundjeri people of the Kulin Nation in Victoria.

ELIZABETH HITCHES: I am Elizabeth Hitches and I join and work from many different lands, including the Yuggera and Turrbal peoples in Queensland. We are going to be your facilitators for the online program today, and just note that closed captions are available for this session and can be enabled by selecting the CC button. If you have any questions, put them in the chat and we'll ask the presenters at the end.

DARREN: As I mentioned, we have an action-packed program today so we'll get straight into it with this first online session, UDL Level Up Implementing Inclusive Practices in Online Courses with Tanya, Trina, Naomi and John. They'll present for approximately 15 minutes and we'll have 5 minutes for questions at the end. If you have any questions, please put those into the chat window and we will ask those. Without any further ado, over to you, Naomi.

NAOMI MCGRATH: Thank you, Darren and Elizabeth, and good morning, everyone, and welcome to our presentation, UDL Level Up Implementing Inclusive Practices in Online Courses. This presentation explores a codesigned approach between two organisations, TAFE New South Wales and TAFE SA, to develop a capability tool to integrate UDL principles into online teaching and learning. The UDL Progression Unit is a tool to support staff by demonstrating how inclusive practices can be embedded in the design process to enhance the accessibility, usability, flexibility and engagement of educational materials. Firstly let us introduce ourselves.

TANYA ALLAN: Hi, I'm Tanya Allan. I am from TAFE SA. I'm privileged to be on Erawirung country. I am a teaching and learning specialist with the Technology Enhanced Portfolio. I will introduce Trina, because unfortunately for us, but fortunately for her, she is off sunning herself in Bali, but she is certainly a big part of this project, Trina Bianchini, who is also a teaching and learning specialist for TAFE SA. She normally sits and works on Kaurna land. She has the Inclusive and Accessibility Portfolio.

NAOMI: I am Naomi McGrath. I am a project manager in Inclusive Design Educational Quality at TAFE NSW and I come to you from Gumbaynggirr country.

JOHN FARDOULIS: Hi. I'm John Fardoulis. I am the Lead Universal Design in Educational Quality at TAFE NSW, and I join you from Darkinjung country.

TANYA: To give you some background on this project, TAFE SA has been working on developing an Inclusive Education Roadmapping Guideline for our institution. This work commenced at the beginning of last year, and in our planning we identified that, ideally, we would like to design and develop a resource that educators could use to see the different levels of our inclusive education framework. As I hope you know, TAFE SA, in partnership with ADCET, facilitate a UDL community of practice. This community of practice brings together academics, teachers and practitioners from across the tertiary and higher education sectors, and it was at one of these meetings that Naomi and John presented the work that they were doing in inclusive education design space. And I must admit, I thought they had said they had designed and developed a similar resource to what we were looking to do. So I thought, I am not a big believer in reinventing the wheel, I am a huge believer in collaboration and sharing and caring where we can. So I asked my director if she could reach out and ask her counterpart in TAFE NSW if we could see what they had produced.

So I was connected with the lovely Naomi and John. It was during this meeting I realised I had actually misheard and the resource hadn't yet been created. So as I said, that was the start of a beautiful relationship. Of course, we had to liaise with our legal and delegations team, but what we now have is an approved partnership between our two institutions to work together to produce this resource. Thanks, John.

To give us some context as to where TAFE SA is, we established a learning design framework about 3 years ago. There is several components to our framework which we umbrella under the term "digital toolkit". We have the Digital Teaching and Learning Standards which has seven standards and multiple indicators of practice. The learning design power which provides guidance and exemplars across five stages of the TED process to support their development and quality of learning materials. Technology Enhanced Delivery, or TED for short, levels to learn, which has been created to support consistent design within the LMS. Each TED level provides options to enhance the student experiences in LEARN. LEARN is the name of our LMS which is Moodle based. We also have the LEARN Shell, which is an institution LMS template. LEARN ED, which is a resource or user guide for educators on how to use LEARN.

The digital toolkit framework was created to enable accessibility, usability, inclusive education to be threaded throughout the design and development stages. We embedded the principles so the process as a designer would educate and move through the learning design process these elements were addressed. Although during the last couple of years we realised there was more of a need to be explicit about these elements, so we developed the Inclusive Education Roadmap.

The roadmap is our latest addition to our digital toolkit, and spotlights and emphasises our commitment at TAFE SA to support inclusivity and groups that are traditionally underrepresented. It positions inclusive teaching and learning practices as fundamentalist and lays their options and directors directions that educators and designers might take in not only meeting access and equity obligations, but also providing empowering learning experiences for our students.

Our roadmap and guidelines have 3 pillars: accessibility, usability and UDL. And we've sign posted the roadmap with opportunities to explore those side roads by engaging with numerous tools and resources that will support educational staff who designed this as they journey on this path.

The signposts or markers along our journey are: (1) awareness, (2) engagement, (3) capability building and, (4) consistent application. This joint project with TAFE NSW will form part of that capability stage of our project and journey. Thanks, John.

JOHN: Thanks Tanya. At TAFE NSW, the umbrella term for the quality processes we have in place that underpin everything we do is the educational quality framework, or EQF, which supports the TAFE NSW self-assurance model.

Now, the self-assurance model is a mechanism for guiding and documenting educational quality. Now, the EQF aims to provide an evidence-based approach embedding good practice principles for curriculum, assessments, learner support, equity, teacher currency and capability, industry, employer and community engagement.

EQF measures 5 critical educational areas that focus on the learner's experience and outcomes as the core. The strategic initiative this project supports is quality area 1, learning and assessment, and quality area 2, learner support of the EQF. To strengthen this, the TAFE NSW Inclusive Design (ID) standards were endorsed and published. These ID standards set clear requirements and expectations to aid in creating and maintaining a welcoming, accessible, flexible and inclusive learning experience.

The standards were created from extensive research and a wide range of consultations across the organisation to gather feedback and learn from other perspectives and lived experiences. They also integrate key objectives from the TAFE NSW Strategic Plan and other TAFE NSW policies and initiatives.

Our inclusive design standards are organised in 5 focus areas: (1) accessibility, focusing on meeting the needs of all learners and staff, including those with disability, by ensuring products, content development tools and related delivery technologies are accessible; (2) communication, addressing learners' diverse abilities, language and cultural backgrounds by using clear and consistent language, well-structured content and scaffolded learning sequences; (3) cultural connection, focusing on embracing and promoting a sense of connection, identity and purpose within learning through appropriate cultural authenticity; (4) universal design for learning (UDL) focusing on embedding the UDL framework with a commitment to the UDL +1 approach; (5) usability, focusing on the customer experience and how easy user interfaces are to operate and access by ensuring products, content development tools and related delivery technologies are user friendly enabling safety, efficiency and effectiveness for all users.

We are developing tools to ensure that the ID standards are embedded in our processes. We published our TAFE NSW Inclusive Design Toolkit earlier this year, which we keep updating with support material for our product designers and staff across the organisation.

We are co-developing another tool with Tanya and Trina from TAFE SA. Here is Naomi to tell you more.

NAOMI: Thanks, John. The project team are currently co developing our UDL level up concept that will be a capability resource available for staff to experience how UDL applications and inclusive design can be embedded into teaching and learning materials.

Our concept is similar to the UDL +1 approach by Tobin and Behling to add one more option for learners to provide flexibility and remove potential barriers in the learning process. The UDL level up is the creation of a standalone unit highlighting varying levels of lessons incorporating inclusive design and demonstrating a practical UDL application. The idea is to see the beneficial progression of the unit when inclusive design and UDL is incorporated.

In developing the unit the same content will be produced four times improving the design throughout each level. I will also note that each organisation will have slight differences in this model to contextualise the UDL progression unit to their organisation's frameworks, terminology, processes and tools.

The levelling up model starts with a simple design that might not meet all our quality and compliance guidelines. We then build on this first lesson to make sure it meets accessibility standards, as well as incorporating UDL +1 approaches. We then build again on that lesson and embed usability and communication standards and, again, incorporate UDL +1 approaches.

Finally, our last lesson demonstrates all that has been incorporated to improve the learner's experience adding choice and flexibility and enhancing with universal design for learning. We will show the differences between the learning experience and the design approach at each level and note how improvements have been made throughout the levels with the addition of an inclusive design analysis.

The analysis will explain the different methods and tools and how intentionally designing, teaching, learning and assessment can minimise barriers for learners and, therefore, benefit everyone, rather than having to make individual accommodations. This also helps support staff in ways they can start introducing small changes over time by embedding UDL prompts, and is resourced to always go back to and learn from.

When working on the unit, we found it much easier to take a backwards design approach, where we started with learning materials that were of a quality standard and enhanced on that where we could, to then work backwards to remove any elements of good design. We worked alongside our legal teams to source the most appropriate learning materials for the project, given IP constraints and third-party resources.

As noted earlier, the UDL progression unit for each organisation, although having the same learning content will have slight variations given the organisational frameworks, processes and available tools. However, the collaborations, lessons learnt, complexities, achievements and passion from the project team has been an amazing experience to be part of.

TANYA: So where to from here? We have to finish creating the unit. It has been a great process. Longer than we expected, perhaps, but making sure that we contextualise it for our organisations. We need to pilot and collect feedback from our staff. We need to implement those changes and roll it out to the wider group. We of course present it to our UDL community of practice, and if you have a 2025 UDL Symposium and you'll have us, we'll report back here as to how we've been going. Thanks, John.

JOHN: We are over to questions now.

DARREN: Excellent. Thank you all. I love the idea of the level up, and you've put it so articulately, I should say, in a nice simple way. And I had to put a comment in certainly about the accessibility. Was there a reason for choosing the accessibility as that level 1 step? Because I know from accessibility, so many other things are then much easier to do. So that was a deliberate by design?

JOHN: Definitely. Well, number 1 is, accessibility is a legal requirement, so we had to do it anyway and, yeah, everything is based on that. So that was the main thing for that.

DARREN: Brilliant. I have got another couple of questions that came through. Were there any unforeseen benefits of collaborating to create a resource like this? It is not easy working across institutions.

TANYA: I'm happy to go. I have found it's hugely beneficial. I am learning a lot from John and Naomi, just their experience and what they have been through and what they are going through. Sometimes it is nice to be in an environment where you don't feel so solo. So TAFE SA is a lot smaller than TAFE NSW. So I think in working together, the things that they do even yesterday we were talking about just something outside of the project related to accessibility, but outside of that, and their knowledge and skills for me, it means that I am learning as well just outside of the project. So, yeah, it has been great. I think this won't be the last. So, as I said, the start of a beautiful relationship.

DARREN: There is a question there in the chat as well can we make the link to the community of practice live? We'll put that in there. That's available on the ADCET website as well, the community of practice. There is lots of collaboration happening from a lot of people from different organisations now as part of that UDL community of practice.

Along with that collaboration, I suppose, the question is there any tips or, I suppose, what's been the most eye opening that you've come across and gone, "We weren't expecting this to actually happen through collaborating", that you'd like to share with some others?

NAOMI: I might take this one. I think one of the main things was that we realised we are not alone in this journey. It is definitely a journey. And knowing that both organisations are trying to achieve the same outcome, it was really beneficial having those discussions. And as mentioned, there was some complexities between trying to codesign something but having very different you know, frameworks quite similar, but processes and tools that are available are very different. Sizing, like Tanya mentioned as well, you know, how to implement something when you've got a huge cohort of staff from various levels. So the idea of having a tool like this and a resource, whether it is a teacher, a learning designer, can come in and can see where they can help make improvements to then have those improvements for our students. So, yeah.

DARREN: Excellent. I suppose with that, I will do a little bit of a follow up, because we are about to run out of time. Resistance, too. By doing something that's scaled up, have you found there is much less resistance, much more ability to get on board with a colleague and start that journey?

NAOMI: Yeah, absolutely. I think, too and John, you can jump in, if you like having that and just having a practical example that, you know, people can actually see, "oh, wow, that will make a difference", or "I didn't even think that if I included this particular aspect which was UDL would actually mean that all the students would have that same experience". So I think it has just been a bit of a game changer in that sense of promoting UDL and having people get on board in that journey and embedding it, yeah. Do you want to add anything, John?

JOHN: Definitely. Also being able to sort of say, "It is not just us saying it. Other people, like TAFE SA, and the community of practice are all saying the same thing. It helps to support us doing all this." So yeah, we've learnt a lot from each other and it is great.

DARREN: Excellent. There is a bit of love certainly in the chat there that I can see. And Julian, thank you for that comment, collaboration is the key when working with people in different States and it has worked well for her. It's worked well for me, and it has worked well for everybody. We have run out of time. They're very short sessions. Thank you very much.

The contact details are there to follow up. The recordings of this session will be up on the ADCET website in the coming days after we get everything else sorted. Thank you, everybody, for this first session. We'll see you back for session 2 at 9.45, in about 10 minutes. Thank you to our presenters, much appreciated.