LARA RAFFERTY: Welcome Helen Black to the stage.

HELEN BLACK: Thank you, and welcome to the session and to everybody who is online and recording, I believe. So this is my second presentation today. The one this morning was with some colleagues of mine. This one is all about what I've been doing. So I've been developing an inclusive curriculum, deliberately inclusive curriculum, for undergraduate accounting students. And I've been doing this with my teaching team who are giving me their time and ideas and everything for free because I have no funding. I am a poor academic. We are using the principles of UDL, and we're not strictly using them. We're keeping this in mind, we're keeping accessibility, we're keeping students and hurdles that they have to come across and the barriers that they may be facing, and I say maybe because I don't know who my students are until they turn up. Until they're enrolled I don't know. And even then, I don't know unless they have disclosed that they need particular things from me.

So what am I doing? I'm redesigning the first accounting subject that they take within the accounting undergraduate program. And I'm doing this to include every learner to maximise their full participation and engagement opportunities. So trying to bridge where they are to where I need them to be before the end of my subject so that I set them up for success for continuing on.

Through doing that, I'm increasing transition and retention through inclusion and accessibility. Well, that's the aim. Hopefully I'll be here next year telling you what a great job I did of that and the numbers should hopefully speak for themselves, but let's see when we get there.

I want to provide them with choice and I want to provide them with flexibility as much as I can. If you saw my morning's session, you would have seen that I alluded to one of the biggest barriers that I have is professional bodies. Even though it is the very first accounting subject, they still have to have a final exam worth 50% that's closed book and all of these regulations that are imposed on us even before the university starts to impose on us. So what I'm doing and why I'm doing it is to remove the unseen barriers, because the unseen barriers are actually as diverse as our learners themselves and they don't always come with a diagnosis. They don't always come with some sort of reasonable adjustment eligibility thing.

Who? I am the subject coordinator and I'm doing this with my adjunct teaching team. When we were in the marking session at the end of last session I started talking about "I've got my ADP", which is an academic development program, sort of like a sabbatical. I put in a competitive process and said, "I really want to do this", and I got through and was approved. So I've had the first half of this year off teaching to do that. They said, "Oh, that's really great. I want to be part of that and I've got some ideas." One of my adjunct teaching team is actually a head TAFE teacher who has recently retired from TAFE and is just, you know, working part time now teaching for me at the university. So really lucky to have such great expertise and experience on board.

None of us have any training in accessibility or inclusion, or EDI or anything like that, but we are just, I guess, people with empathy and we want to set our students up for success.

So really happy to have these guys on board, and they've been fantastic in giving me feedback on the things I've developed, in coming up with ideas and other things that we can develop and implement as well.

So doing this, we're also I'll get to it in a second, but we are doing a literature review thingy, and I wanted to bring them into that so that we could have a shared vision of what inclusivity looks like. What does it mean to have a sense of belonging and to promote that? What does it mean to make things accessible and to be inclusive but sensitive, and give students the flexibility if they don't want to work in a group, how can we adapt this so they can do it as an individual without carrying the burden of the work that was designed for a group.

And we want to ensure that all learners in all classes experience the same level of inclusivity; they have the same learning experience across the classes. So it's been really fantastic to have them on board to build this shared vision, to have this connection between us that we hope the students will actually see when they come to our classes. And at the end of the day, equity and inclusion is everyone's responsibility. It's not the disability support team's responsibility, it's not just my responsibility; it's everybody's responsibility. It's even the student's responsibility to be inclusive of each other. So this is what we want to emulate in the classroom.

Of course, we're not doing this on our own. We're going to be surveying the learners and we're taking on board what they've already told us, even though we didn't ask specific questions, we've gone back, we've reflected on what the students have told us in previous sessions in our teaching feedback on teaching, on our student feedback on the units. So we're taking all of these things, we've pulled them apart and reflected on them, we've reflected on the content and the way we were delivering the subject in previous semesters, the way it was designed, the way it was structured, the way the assessments were run, when we told them about assessments, the marketing guides, the criteria. We reflected on all of this and we pulled it apart. What are we already doing that's inclusive? What are we doing that oh, gosh, that is not inclusive, that's really exclusive, because this is unconscious bias that we had built in and now we've stripped it back to pull that apart.

We also have the disability support team. And although they are seeing the students who are disclosing or trying to disclose to get some sort of accommodations, they're also very aware of the different you know, they're more privy to information than we are about the challenges that students are actually facing. So when they tell me that "oh, you've got a student in your class and they get 15 minutes on each assignment and they can have an extension of a week, and they may need to stand and stretch", that really doesn't help me with the learning barriers that they're actually facing. If they're having trouble connecting to prior knowledge, giving them 15 minutes extra on an exam to sit there and stare at the paper is not going to help them. I want to know more about these students. So talking to the disability support team has been really good to get an idea about the different barriers.

So I am building this curriculum to build bridges over these barriers for students that may or may not have these barriers, but I'm trying to incorporate ways around and navigate, you know, little side paths and things around these potential barriers for these students to tap into if they need them.

We've also got curriculum advisors and learning futures and librarians who have been good with providing us with resources or instructions. For example, I recently discovered 5HP no, H5P. I am in love. Where have I been? I love that stuff. So then I got busy and I'm building all these games. Every module has a game zone. And I love it but I've got to stop because I get to the point I've got so many more good ideas but I'm running out of time. I have to stop and only go with what I've started and do it properly, do it well, and then I can add more in.

So the IT team has also been great in giving us assistance with knowing what accessible technologies and learning technologies there are, how to access them, where to send students to get so that they can access them, so that they know how to use them and these types of things. They've been really good. We definitely haven't done this on our own.

So we framed this as a participatory action research because my ADP, or my sabbatical application, required me to have a research component. I went, okay, this is what we're doing, let's write something about it. So we framed it as a participatory action research project, and it really is. That starts with a scoping review that I mentioned earlier, and the individual reflection that we're doing, and that's going to build into some of the data for the next publication, not the scoping review. And then we're incorporating UDL and active learning into the learning modules as best we can. We're not doing it perfectly, we're not working necessarily with the 31 checkpoints, but I'm across that because I studied it with Annette, as I told you this morning, in my Masters of Education, but I'm just keeping in mind the principles and the sentiment of UDL while I'm doing this. I think, you know, inclusion is a journey and I think it takes all of us to do it imperfectly than just a handful of us doing it absolutely perfectly and dot point perfect. So this is my starting point, anyway.

We'll also be surveying the students for their learning preferences, so using a VARC model survey, and although I can't get them to complete that before I build these materials, I can then use that in the classroom or to adapt in real-time on the fly as we go to hopefully I've covered some of these, thinking about all the different preferences that they might have? visual, audio? and to build that in.

We're also using a reflective piece, which is helping students well, designed to help students to think about how they learn and what activities are helping them and what their study techniques are, and then having a follow up part to that. Is this working for you? Did that work for you? Did you follow through on how you said you were going to approach the subject? How did that work? What activities you had in class or online were helpful or not helpful? And those sorts of things.

Then of course we've evaluated what we were doing and reflected on that. We're implementing, and then we're going to repeat. We're going to evaluate, we're going to reflect, and then adjust and then implement some more in the following session. So it's a continuous improvement.

So I'm hoping that we have well, we have identified some unconscious bias, and hopefully we'll continue to be able to recognise that when it does come up again, if it comes up in other new materials or new activities, whatever that might look like.

We wanted to remove and minimise the impact of these unseen barriers and to engage learners in their learning to create a more equitable and inclusive environment for them to learn in. And the cohesion in the explicitly designed inclusive curriculum, by having my adjunct teaching team on board, and having them have input, which is giving them ownership over what we've created as well, has been really important, and it's been a great initiative. It's worked out so much better than I even imagined that it could have, so that's been amazing. Again, continuous improvements for centred teaching and learning. Of course, this doesn't come without challenges, and we did anticipate this at the outset. Some of them we're still trying to figure out how to get around and that's the university and professional body policies, and all we can do at the moment is to prepare students, as best we can, to face those barriers, but I think in the future I would like to find a way to take it to the professional bodies and say, you know, it's time you got with the program. This isn't working and, you know, you need to adapt.

Balancing academic integrity with flexible assessment access can be an issue. We're just going to have to see how that plays out at this point, but I do think it's going to be a bit of a juggling act giving some students access. Do I have to rewrite an assignment because that assignment is already out there? And I want to give students timely feedback, those who have handed it in on time, they need their feedback, but the other students who haven't done it, they're going to need an opportunity, so I guess it's going to be rewriting assessments to address that.

Potential to overwhelm some learners with choice. Currently I've redone all my lectures and I've put them through Panopto so I've got them with closed captions, so I've got a lovely video with closed captions. I've also provided it as an audio so you can listen to it on the train, or while you're feeding the kids, or bathing the kids or whatever you might be doing to fit into your life, as well as PDF. So trying to word that so they clearly know that this is the same thing three ways, not, you know, you've got all this stuff because it looks like a lot that I'm giving the students.

The other one is decolonising foundational accounting theory and practice, and that has been a bit of a challenge, but our Western Australian colleagues, their presentation this morning, I've got cards, I'm hitting them up, I really need your assistance here to show different perspectives that are accurate, because trying to find that information reliably is quite difficult. So decolonising is something that I've got to do better than what I already am.

And the diffusion of the inclusive practices to other subject coordinators. I think we've heard a lot about that today and I've got a lot to take away. So I've bought Tom's book, so that's going to be my reading material on the train home tomorrow. I've got so much out of this day and I hope that you guys have too. I'd like to thank you for your time and would appreciate some questions. Yes? Thank you.

SPEAKER: So this is a question? and it's probably not only to yourself, but other people that are applying UDL. How are you getting the corporate and public service ready for this? Because I'm already on board, but I'm only one person. How are higher Ed bringing the rest of the domain world into UDL world?

HELEN: That's a good question. I don't have an answer. Although this is a very first subject that students are taking when they've come to uni and this is one of the reasons why I think this is a really important subject for me to be doing this, because they have come through high school where primary school and high school, my daughter in law is a primary school teacher, and she already has to differentiate three, four ways every lesson, every single thing she does, and I'm sure high school is the same. Students have come through these school systems where they've had Mum and Dad to advocate for them. Things go on behind the scenes when the student is with their friends or out playing. The teachers and the family and the support people are working through these things for the student. They come to university, they have to advocate for themselves, and if they don't they're not getting the thing. Like I said this morning, they want to be fitting in. They don't want to be seen as different. They don't want to use this label. Maybe they don't. Maybe they're just adapting to being an adult and leaving school and registering cars and, you know, adult life. It's a big adjustment at that time. And to come to your first subject at university it's, like Tom said, a freshman cliff. It's a lot. Yes?

SPEAKER: I liked what you were saying about needing the professional accrediting bodies to come along the journey too. A lot of the people that I work with also have external accrediting bodies that need to adapt what their expectations are of the qualifications that they're accrediting, and I think that's a real challenge because we might be there, but if they're not there then they still have a different perspective

HELEN: Absolutely. Thank you. Yes?

SPEAKER: Thanks, Helen. That was a really great talk. It sounds like you're doing some really interesting and quite hands on work. I'm very excited to see where this goes for the rest of the semester. You mentioned earlier that even before starting to revamp the subject there was a requirement of the 50% exam. Could you maybe speak more to how you're sort of dealing with coming up against these barriers yourself? How you're working to rethink particularly the assessments in that way a little bit more?

HELEN: I varied the assessments. So we have low stake assessments that are weekly and scaffolded, and although I thought things were scaffolded before, I have really scaffolded them this time and I've brought some gamification in and things like that. But as far as the exam is concerned, what we are doing in the class it's undergraduate accounting, so we start with recognising a business transaction, and then we're journalising the business transaction the following week, the following week after that, then we're posting the journal entries to the ledger, then we're taking the ledger balances and preparing a trial balance. Following those four weeks, they have a StuVac week. The first week back we're recapping. And we go back and we're playing monopoly to do this. Each term, each roll of the dice is a business transaction. So it's a game in the classroom. We start with teams which are maybe two people, maybe three people. If students insist on wanting to do it on their own, they're more than welcome to do that as well. It's adaptable to that.

Then in that week after the StuVac we start a brand-new game and we're playing on our own now. Every student. Those students who may have been more comfortable playing along and watching and being part of a team, maybe not the driver of the team, are now in the driver's seat and they're going to drive. And they're going to have support while they do that, but we've got that one week right in the middle, revision of this. Then we're moving on and showing how these things relate to then we move into understanding the performance of the business, understanding the financial position of the business, and scaffolding on to this. And we're going to use our ledgers and we're going to use our information that we've been building the whole time to do that. And then when I do the exam, we're going to do exactly what we've done in class and exactly what we've revised, and that's how I'm preparing them, because you've done this. You've got this. You know? I'll support them through that. We've got a PASS class, so a peer assisted study session, and we're going to have online consultation as well as office hours as well. Thanks for your question.

SPEAKER: Hi. Just a quick one. You were saying you were asking students how they prefer to learn. Going from high school to uni education or higher education, you don't necessarily get that option in high school. Do you go through like the different styles of learning with people, or is there a way is that sort of a stepping stone that we need to look at maybe?

HELEN: Good question. The survey that I'm using is actually a VARC survey and it gives them the different scenarios. If you wanted to go and get a computer or something the same as your friend's, would you get him to draw you a map? Would you want the address and look it up? Would you identify it as being close to somewhere you know and then find a way? So it's different ways of and then it gives you a score and it kind of spits out. But students are not expected to have one preferred, there will be visual and audio or they'll have different ways. And it's not going to be definitive and it's not going to be black and white, but it's going to give me a better idea that, okay, that audio lecture that I'm giving them, that's on the right track, or am I wasting time with that?

LARA: We're just a squeak over time, so I think we'll leave it there. If you would join me in thanking Dr Helen Black.