



Executive Summary

A Signature Pedagogy titled 'Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Well-being' has been developed through a cross university collaboration between the School of Education, School of Psychology, Oorala Aboriginal Centre, and the Student Accessibility and Well-being Centre. Funding through The Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program (HEPPP) funded the 'Enabling student access, participation and retention through support for mental health and well-being' project, as part of which the Signature Pedagogy was designed.

The project aims to provide undergraduate students from low socio-economic (SES), Indigenous, and/or rural and regional backgrounds with learning opportunities (both on-campus and online) that align with mental health and well-being approaches. This document details the principles that make up this Signature Pedagogy. It specifically addresses inclusion, cultural responsivity and student well-being.

The Signature Pedagogy has been developed in consultation with an Indigenous Reference Group and a Student Advisory Group. Governing principles have been identified for the Signature Pedagogy and are outlined in this document.

Governing principles for the Signature Pedagogy:

- Empower students. Opportunities are provided that encourage students to make decisions about how they learn best, and they have the resources they need to do so. Multiple means of content representation, student expression, and student engagement are supported. This entails a variety of options for participation and for assessment.
- Curate authentic opportunities for students to engage with readings and materials that privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives on the topics under study.
- Create connections. UNE lecturers have a strong online social presence. Student interactions and connections are encouraged. These connections can be strengthened formally (through online tutorials), and informally (through online meeting spaces).
- Engage students to take action in regard to their own well-being. Opportunities are provided so students can seek support as needed and understand how they can access key resources.

The Project Team: Associate Professor Jennifer Charteris, Professor Sue Gregory, Dr Joanna Anderson, Dr Genevieve Thraves, Associate Professor Navjot Bhullar, Ms Donna Moodie, Mr Guido Posthausen, Ms Caroline Pflaumer-Winter, Ms Julie Kryger, Ms Richelle Roberts, Ms Julie-Ann Barker, and Ms Harriet Ridolfo.

Signature Pedagogy Overview

Pedagogy pertains to the intentional attempt to influence how and what knowledge and identities are produced within and among specific sets of social relations (Giroux & Simon, 1989). Research tells us that the pedagogical decisions of teachers, matter (Guerriero, 2013). It follows that the tacit and deliberate actions of lecturers at UNE, and the decisions they make about the curation of unit and course content, have significant implications for our students' well-being and their access to and success in academic learning.

The signature pedagogy - 'Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Well-being' - aims to support inclusion, cultural responsiveness, and well-being, and draws on Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, and Trauma Informed Pedagogy. Four principles have been developed for the 'Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Well-being'. These principles provide overarching guidance for the design, implementation and enactment of pedagogy that supports a diverse range of students at UNE. The Signature Pedagogy has a focus on the implementation of strategies that improve access to undergraduate courses for people from regional and remote Australia, low socio-economic status (SES) backgrounds, and/or Indigenous persons. There is a focus on improving the retention and completion rates for these cohorts of students. At its core, this pedagogy has an aspiration to ensure UNE students experience education in a safe and accessible way and aligns with UNE's commitment in the Future Fit strategic plan to acknowledge and validate the "unique life experience, knowledge and skills students bring to university". With COVID lockdowns impacting student mental health, this focus on teaching approaches that support student mental health and well-being, is timely.

Figure 1. represents the nexus of different research informed pedagogical approaches that constitute the '*Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Well-being*.' This pedagogy is underpinned by evidence informed well-being initiatives.

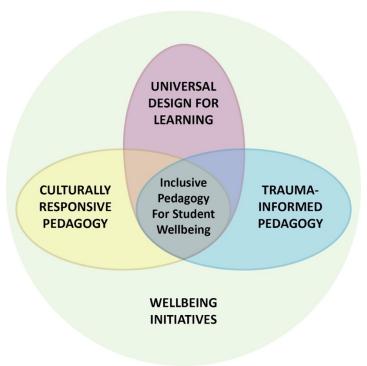


Figure 1. Model of 'Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Well-being'.

The curation of a signature pedagogy guided by inclusive and culturally responsive practices while also focussed on student well-being, affords an unequivocal aspiration that Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students who live in rural and remote regions of Australia, and students from low socioeconomic backgrounds will make connections, access artefacts, encounter learning environments, and procure tailored well-being support, to maximise their experience of a quality education at UNE.

The 'Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Well-being' tightly aligns with the UNE Strategic Plan 2021 – 2030 titled 'Future fitting lives and communities'.



The first dimension of the Strategic Plan, 'Personalised Learning Journeys', aligns with the Universal Design for Learning approach identified in Principle 1. In this dimension there is an emphasis on:

crafting, adapting and supporting learning journeys that are distinctive in their accessibility and flexibility. Whatever the goal, whatever the starting point, whatever the mode of study, whatever the route to get there, we will provide the opportunities to succeed.

(UNE, 2021, online)

The second dimension of the Strategic Plan, 'Empowering Communities', aligns with the Culturally Responsive approach identified in Principle 2. In this dimension there is an emphasis on:

creating and sharing knowledge to make a difference locally, regionally and globally. We do this through transformative teaching, learning and research, informed by our engagement which reflects the unique aspirations of each community.

(UNE, 2021, online)

The third dimension of the Strategic Plan, 'Building Resilience', aligns with the Trauma Informed pedagogical approach and emphasis on Well-being that are embedded in Principles 3 and 4. In this dimension there is an emphasis on:

committing to... resilience for the University, our staff, our students and our communities. We will provide students with the flexibility to enable them to overcome traditional obstacles to success. [We will] maximise their strengths, overcome traditional obstacles and navigate their own path to success. (UNE, 2021, online).

Approaches used in the Signature Pedagogy

The four key approaches of the signature pedagogy are explained in detail in this section: Universal Design for Learning, Culturally Responsive Pedagogy, Trauma Informed Pedagogy, and an emphasis on Well-being.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN FOR LEARNING

Universal Design for Learning provides educators in higher education with a set of principles that enables them to develop curricula, select materials and create learning environments that enable universal access for students, including those with disabilities (Rose, & Meyer, 2006). Initially developed by the Center for Applied Special Technology (CAST) and originating from Universal Design (UD) in architecture, Universal Design for Learning (UDL) has an emphasis on intentional learning design that addresses the needs of a wide variety of students (Fornauf, & Erickson, 2020).

Universal Design for Learning guidelines highlight a need for teachers in higher education to meet diverse student learning needs with a range of approaches to teaching, student engagement, and assessment. Through the adoption of this approach, environments, artefacts, and communications can be designed so they are accessible by all people to the greatest extent possible, without the need for adaption or specialised design. There are three primary principles. Students need multiple means to support:

- the representation of information,
- action and expression, and
- engagement.

The key tenet is that changes made to accommodate those who can experience disadvantage, will benefit everyone. There is an impetus for teachers to be versatile in their pedagogy, so they recognise students' abilities and learning strengths in order to enable student access to course content, and ultimately achieve success in their learning (Izzo, Murray, & Novak, 2008).

Provide Multiple Means of Representation

Multiple representations enable students to forge connections within concepts in ways that can enhance their learning (Meyer et al., 2014). As students interpret and comprehend information in various ways, there is no optimal 'representation' approach for all learners. Therefore the provision of representation options is advisable. In addition to PDFs, Word documents, and PowerPoint slides, concepts could be illustrated through multiple media. Additional guidance could be provided through tables, diagrams, charts, and so on.

The relationships between elements can be made explicit. When providing text, graphics, diagrams, or formulas, key aspects can be identified to make them more accessible. Examples can be used to emphasise different elements. This can help to activate the students' prior knowledge. The processing and visualisation of information can be supported through 'chunking' information into smaller elements.

Provide Multiple Means of Action and Expression

Students navigate learning environments and express agency in different ways. Some students may be more proficient with their oral skills than their written ones, and vice versa. Strategies can be provided to assist with goal setting, planning and strategy development for learning in UNE units. Students can be provided with resources to manage information and monitor their progress.

Provide Multiple Means of Engagement

Multiple sources of feedback can be provided to the student, so they have information about their learning. Some students may like to work individually while others may prefer group work. There can be scaffolds so that material is relevant and valuable to students' interests and goals. There can be a range of media used to support the different preferences students have in their learning.

CULTURALLY RESPONSIVE PEDAGOGY

The term culturally responsive pedagogy refers to teaching approaches that prioritise and mobilise as resources, the cultural repertoires and intelligences that students bring to the learning relationship (Morrison et al., 2019). Culturally responsive pedagogy has been defined as:

effective teaching and learning [that occurs] in a culturally supported, learner centred context, whereby the strengths students bring to [the learning] are identified, nurtured, and utilised to promote student achievement. (Richards et al., 2007, p. 64).

Culturally responsive pedagogy is aligned with cultural competencies, which comprise a suite of skills that can be gained through working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and ongoing professional learning. Three key cultural competencies identified by the Australian Government (2017) in the *National Strategic Framework for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples' Mental Health and Social and Emotional Well-being 2017-2023* document are Cultural Awareness, Cultural Respect, and Cultural Responsiveness.

Cultural Awareness

Cultural Awareness involves understanding the role of cultural difference and diversity. For non-Indigenous staff this means the capacity for self-reflection as to how the Western dominant culture impacts on both themselves and on Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and can impact the [environment] they in which they operate.

Cultural Respect

Cultural Respect involves valuing Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people and cultures. This includes a commitment to self-determination and building respectful partnerships.

Cultural Responsiveness

Cultural Responsiveness involves having the ability and skills to assist people of a different culture other than your own. (Australian Government, 2017, p. 15)

The Aboriginal Reference Group for this Higher Education Participation and Partnerships Program project signalled the importance of ensuring the cultural safety of UNE units. First conceptualised by Ramsden (1992, 2002), a framework of cultural safety explicitly acknowledges the impacts of colonisation and racism on Indigenous peoples and the related inequalities in power, socioeconomic position, and health within neo-colonial societies (Mackean, Fisher, Friel, & Baum, 2020). There is a need to consider how colonising structures, processes and/or attitudes manifest in higher education

settings and serve to exacerbate inequalities between non-Indigenous lectures and Indigenous students.

A pedagogical approach that fosters cultural safety "seeks to subvert power inequalities... through valuing the cultural knowledge and experience of the Indigenous students" (Mackean, Fisher, Friel, & Baum, 2020, p. 340). Advocating for culturally responsive teaching, Gay (2015) observes:

no ethnic group should have exclusive power, or total cultural and political dominion over others, even if it is a numerical majority. Rather, ethnic, racial, cultural, social, and linguistic pluralism is considered as a natural attribute of humankind, as a fundamental feature of the democratic ethos (whether as an ethic of community living or a structure of government), and as a necessary component of quality education in both national and international contexts. (p. 125)

Culturally responsive pedagogies can also be aligned with Rigney's (1999) Indigenist epistemologies, which is premised on three key ideas. Firstly there is an emphasis on emancipation. It is empowering, seeks de-colonisation, and promotes an anti-deficit view of Aboriginal identity. Secondly, there is recognition of the integrity of Indigenous knowledges. Indigenous students are honoured. Indigenous ways of knowing, being and doing and Indigenous knowledge transmission is appreciated. Thirdly there is the privileging of Indigenous voices. There is engagement, democratic inclusion, and narratives promoted that counter hegemony.

Culturally responsive pedagogies can also align with Jindaola. This involves the reconciling Indigenous and non-Indigenous knowledges. Jindaola can be described a methodological approach which foregrounds the voice of local Aboriginal knowledge holders in the design and implementation of teaching programs. It is preferable to a reductionist focus on embedding pre-defined 'packages' of Indigenous knowledges and pedagogies into the curricular (Kennedy et al., 2018). As an educational development program and an 'Aboriginal way', Jindaola can be understood as connecting 'old ways' in new times to produce structured support. Jindaola:

- upholds the respect and integrity of the Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives relevant to the disciplinary areas where they are being integrated,
- facilitates genuine two-way relationships around appropriate knowledges and perspectives with the appropriate Elders and Knowledge Holders, and
- cultivates the authentic Acknowledgement of Country through the embedding of appropriate Indigenous Knowledges and perspectives, and the act of respecting and privileging Country, in the curriculum.

The academic development methodology described here is both an experience and a journey, which engages lectures and students in processes of decolonising their own thinking.

TRAUMA-INFORMED PEDAGOGY

The past thirty years has seen a strong body of research in the medical and judicial fields identify and describe the impact of trauma on those who experience it. In more recent years, researchers and practitioners in education have recognised the need for the development of approaches that acknowledge the impact of trauma, and support students who have experienced it. These are referred to as trauma-informed practices or trauma-informed pedagogies.

Trauma is defined as 'any experience in which a person's internal resources are not adequate to cope with external stressors' (Hoch et al, 2015, as cited in Davidson 2021, p. 4). These experiences

can be a single event, happen multiple times, or be ongoing. Trauma can happen to individuals or communities, and sometimes the effects of trauma can be passed down to younger generations. In Australia, this has been shown to be the case for some First Nation's people (Menzies, 2019). The same event may affect different people in different ways, so the trauma experience by an individual will be unique. Signs of trauma may be exhibited soon after a significant event or may present themselves years later.

Trauma may be the result of experiences such as:

- Physical or sexual abuse
- Abandonment, neglect, or betrayal of trust (such as abuse from a primary caregiver)
- Death or loss of a loved one
- Caregiver having a life-threatening illness
- Domestic violence
- Poverty and chronically chaotic housing and financial resources
- Automobile accident or other serious accident
- Bullying
- Life-threatening health situations and/or painful medical procedures
- Witnessing police activity or having a family member incarcerated
- Life-threatening natural disasters
- Acts or threats of terrorism (viewed in person or on television)

(Davidson, 2017, p.4)

The Australian National Survey of Mental Health and Well-being reported that 41 percent of the adult population experienced at least one traumatic event before the age of 17 (Barrett, 2020). While there are no statistics on what this looks like in student populations in Australian Universities, in the United States it is understood that between 66 and 85 percent of all students have experienced some form of trauma.

Trauma increases the risk of mental ill-health and can lead to significantly poorer life outcomes for those who experience it (Bendell at al., 2018). Davidson (2017) explains how universities should respond:

...creating a trauma-informed climate requires the entire campus community—faculty members, administrators, staff members, counselors, and clinicians—to deepen its shared understanding of trauma's impacts on learning and agree to a campuswide approach. All staff members must work together with a sense of shared responsibility for the physical, social, emotional, and academic safety of every student. (p. 14)

At the University of New England, we have an opportunity to support students through the implementation of trauma-informed practices and trauma-informed pedagogies. Hoch et al. (2015) described approaches that connect students to their university community, provide opportunities to practice learning learned skills, embrace teamwork and shared leadership, and can anticipant and adapt to the changing needs of students, will provide the best outcomes for students.

WELL-BEING INITIATIVES

The University Mental Health Framework adopted at UNE provides guidance for supporting university student mental health and well-being (Orygen, 2020). The Framework is structured around six principles.

- 1. The student experience is enhanced through mental health and well-being approaches that are informed by students' needs, perspectives, and the reality of their experiences.
- 2. All members of the university community contribute to learning environments that enhance student mental health and well-being.
- 3. Mentally healthy university communities encourage participation; foster a diverse, inclusive environment; promote connectedness; and support academic and personal achievement.
- 4. The response to mental health and well-being is strengthened through collaboration and coordinated actions.
- 5. Students are able to access appropriate, effective, timely services and supports to meet their mental health and well-being needs.
- 6. Continuous improvement and innovation is informed by evidence and helps build an understanding of what works for student mental health and well-being.

Australian and international research has identified an opportunity to better support the "mental wealth" and well-being of university students. *Mental Wealth* is defined as the development of an individual's skills to monitor and maintain their own mental health, foster resilience, increase overall well-being, and support their peers and family (University of Sydney, 2021). *Well-being* is the experience of health, happiness, and prosperity (Davis, 2019). It includes having good mental health, high life satisfaction, a sense of purpose, ability to manage stress and feeling connected. Specific risk factors contribute to poor mental health and well-being among university students, with some cohorts at greater risk than others.

Universities are well positioned to enhance student well-being and academic success by strengthening referral pathways to existing internal support services and making available online, evidence-based resources. Well-being and academic success in turn leads to lower rates of attrition and better life outcomes, including employment, financial stability, and good mental health.

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander, and Rural and Regional students can experience an increased risk of emotional and social health issues at university. Academic pressures can be compounded by separation from family and friends, culture, and traditional lands (Browne, Munro& Cass, 2017). Students from low socio-economic status backgrounds may experience an increased risk of financial pressure and mental health issues at university. 75% of students from this cohort worry about finances, and 17% go without necessities (such as food). The necessity to combine study and employment can impact on the quality of life and social relationships (Browne, Munro& Cass, 2017).

The above pedagogies focus on mental-health and well-being, and when considered together can help deliver a positive, accessible, safe and healthy university experience for students. From these approaches, four principles for an "Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Well-being" have been developed:

- Empower students. Opportunities are provided that encourage students to make decisions about how they learn best, and they have the resources they need to do so. Multiple means of content representation, student expression, and student engagement are supported. This entails a variety of options for participation and for assessment.
- Curate authentic opportunities for students to engage with readings and materials that privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives on the topics under study.

- Create connections. UNE lecturers have a strong online social presence. Student interactions and connections are encouraged. These connections can be strengthened formally (through online tutorials), and informally (through online meeting spaces).
- Engage students to take action in regard to their own well-being. Opportunities are provided so students can seek support as needed and understand how they can access key resources.

The principles detailed here can be incorporated as part of the suite of materials provided in each UNE unit. It is important that the materials included in response to these principles are not offered as an alternate approach, but rather are presented as part of the units' corpus.

Unpacking the Principles of the Signature Pedagogy

PRINCIPLE 1

Empower students. Opportunities are provided that encourage students to make decisions about how they learn best, and they have the resources they need to do so. Multiple means of content representation, student expression, and student engagement are supported. This entails a variety of options for participation and for assessment.

Multiple means of representation are promoted to give students various ways of acquiring information and knowledge. Multiple means of expression are encouraged to provide students alternatives for demonstrating what they know. Multiple means of engagement are fostered to tap into students' interests, offer appropriate challenges, and increase motivation.

The aims of this principle are to ensure:

- Equity people with diverse abilities can access material.
- Flexibility materials cater for a range of student learning preferences.
- Efficiency information is conveyed effectively to the student, in ways that give consideration to ambient conditions and students' sensory abilities.

To achieve these aims:

- The design of Moodle sites will be accessible to everyone. This may include students who are blind and/or who use screen reader technology.
- Students will be able to use different media to access information. Students will be able to listen to a podcast or view a video, as well as engage with written text.

This means that unit coordinators/lecturers ensure they:

- Draw on more than one approach for presenting information. Slides or other visuals are used to support the sharing of auditory information. Written or audio descriptions are used alongside visual diagrams to demonstrate a concept.
- Post or email slides in advance of each class. This enables students to focus the content without trying to copy down information from a slide.
- Use wait time through varying the pacing of lessons. Scaffold time for students to interact with each other and with the content presented.

- Give concrete examples and apply content to real world contexts. Do not assume that students can apply the concepts to other contexts. Give examples to illustrate how to do this. Through connecting content to real-life and concrete examples, learning becomes authentic, and students learn to transfer skills and knowledge between contexts.
- Empower students. Provide opportunities that encourage students' sense of agency. This could be done through offering a variety of options for participation (multiple means of engagement), and for assessment (multiple means of expression).
- Use qualitative feedback on assessment pieces that provides a positive critique which acknowledges what has been done well and how the student can develop and move forward.

PRINCIPLE 2

Curate authentic opportunities for students to engage with readings and materials that privilege Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives on the topics under study.

Cultural perspectives are 'part of', not 'in addition to', the content student learns and the way in which they learn it.

The aims of this principle are to ensure:

- The curation of high-intellectual challenge as students grapple with knowledge tensions.
- Connection to the life-worlds of the Indigenous cohort.
- Cultural differences and perspectives are recognised as a cultural asset.
- An orientation towards activism as students see Aboriginal scholars engaging with knowledge as a political act.

To achieve these aims, the material included should:

- Be emancipatory (empowering; seeks de-colonisation; anti-deficit views of Aboriginal identity).
- Privilege Indigenous voices (engagement, counter hegemony).
- Be incorporated in a way that reflects the legitimacy of Aboriginal epistemologies (ways of knowing, doing and thinking).

This means that unit coordinators/lecturers ensure they:

- Include Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander voices and perspectives in readings and unit materials.
- Incorporate materials among a range of voices, not as 'other'.
- Present a range of Indigenous views to challenge the notion of there being a single Aboriginal culture of voice.
- Review unit materials to ensure that stereotypes are not being perpetuated.
- Challenge deficit mindsets and highlight Indigenous resilience through readings and unit materials.
- Integrate students social and cultural 'funds of knowledge' (ways of knowing and doing) into the unit.

PRINCIPLE 3

Create connections. UNE lecturers have a strong online social presence. Student interactions and connections are encouraged. These connections can be strengthened formally (through online tutorials), and informally (through online meeting spaces).

Connection and belonging have a significant impact on student mental health and well-being.

The aims of this principle are to ensure:

- Students form a connection with their teacher and develop a relationship of trust and respect.
- Connect with peers so the educational experience is not isolating.

To achieve these aims:

- The diverse interests, experiences, and perspectives of students are acknowledged.
- Opportunities exist for student voice and shared perspectives.
- Online presence is valued and promoted for lecturers and students.

This means that unit coordinators/lecturers ensure they:

- Use students' names.
- Use icebreakers strategically.
- Foster community through face-to-face communication and online platforms.
- Provide opportunities for interaction and connection between students synchronously and asynchronously.
- Establish safe spaces for informal, collegial conversations, to complement the formal ones.
- Celebrate learning and achievements where possible.
- Use correct, inclusive language in different contexts (for example the correct use of pronouns respect LGBTIQA+ students).
- Listen to students when they talk about their needs and respond promptly when an issue arises.

PRINCIPLE 4

Engage students to take action in regard to their own well-being. Opportunities are provided so students can seek support as needed and understand how they can access key resources.

The aims of this principle are to:

- Foster proactive, help-seeking behaviour and mental health literacy.
- Facilitate a global community of peer support and mentorship.
- Provide access to evidence-based resources to support overall well-being.
- Provide 24/7 mental health support with real-time escalation.

Students are encouraged to make links with the Wellness Centre at UNE. This is a place where students can access various Well-being Toolkits. These Toolkits facilitate students to be proactive in

monitoring and nurturing their own mental health and well-being. Well-being Toolkits address sleep, nutrition, empowerment, and mindfulness.

There is also an emphasis on the deployment of evidence-informed strategies to support student well-being. The use of these strategies are likely to enhance well-being among university students, which potentially leads to positive experiences and academic outcomes. Strategies can include:

- Information programs to increase mental health awareness amongst staff.
- Mental health literacy programs to increase knowledge and self-efficacy.
- Well-being toolkits to upskill in sleep hygiene, nutrition, self-empowerment, and mindfulness.
- Peer-based programs to broaden support options and build student connection.
- Online mental health resources and forums to provide after-hours support.
- Brief therapy-based interventions.
- Academic skills support.
- Advice on navigating university and accessing supports.

Introducing TalkCampus

TalkCampus, is a tool that is aligned with Principle 4. It is an app that can be downloaded on mobile phones, and offers an online peer to peer mental health and well-being support network.

The aims of this are to ensure that:

- Students can access support as needed.
- Students understand how to access the Well-being Toolkit.

TalkCampus is used to support students to practice self-determination and agency regarding their mental well-being. This sits alongside the Signature Pedagogy and fosters a wrap-around support involving academic and professional staff. TalkCampus is an online application that is aimed to increase student connectedness across a global community. TalkCampus provides students with support anytime of the day, anywhere. Through TalkCampus, students arrive to a community where they can instantly start engaging in an anonymous, safe, and encouraging environment. Through the delivery of TalkCampus, mental "wealth" and well-being is prioritised. Students can personalise their profile to control what they see and increase access to meaningful content. There can be increased engagement with like-minded peers in a safeguarded environment. The format is intuitive and familiar to the student demographic, and hosts several features:

- A live feed where students can post, comment and engage with likeminded students.
- Ability for students to personalise their profile and control what they see.
- Individual profiles for students to express themselves while remaining anonymous.
- Community moderation and escalation pathways.
- Professional 24/7 safety team.
- Access pathways for students to engage with UNE support services.

Bringing it all together

The four principles of the Signature Pedagogy *Inclusive Pedagogy for Student Well-being*, and their associated strategies, work together. It is advocated that academic staff at UNE do not need to implement every strategy. Instead, select a range of strategies across the three pedagogic principles (Principles 1 to 3) that will work for you and your students, and familiarise yourself with Principle 4. When used in conjunction with one another, these principles can support the mental health, or mental "wealth", and the well-being of the diverse cohorts of students who choose to study at UNE.

A suite of instructional videos outlining the signature pedagogy and each of the four principles have been produced, and can be found at: http://www.kaltura.com/tiny/wxl2z

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