

# PUBLISHED VERSION

Anne Hewitt

**Smart Casual - identifying and responding to a national need for discipline- specific teacher development resources for sessional law teachers**

Global Impact Grants - Disciplinary Teaching and Learning, 2022; (2):10-13

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# Global Impact Grants – Issue Two: Disciplinary Teaching and Learning



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## Introduction

Advance HE made 17 awards of Global Impact Grants in July 2022 with the intention of sharing work conducted across our international membership that has had a demonstrable impact on staff or students. We received submissions from over 10 different countries across a range of areas of higher education practice.

This set of the Global Impact Grants brings together case studies that have supported teaching in particular discipline areas, although many of them have applicability across a range of subjects.

It begins with a case study by **Dr Kelly Miller** from Deakin University, which shares work conducted within their Environmental Science department using micro-credentials to support student employability.

**Anne Hewitt's** case study from the University of Adelaide showcases a national initiative across Australia to develop and share resources for the teaching of law specifically for sessional staff.

The iSAP (Integrating Science and Practice) initiative shared by **Allie Ford** of Monash University shares a framework for connecting students with theory using real world examples. It initially began in the teaching of Radiography but has been extended to other disciplines as the project developed.

**Clara Chapdelaine-Feliciati's** case study from Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in China focuses on a conference on combating human trafficking used as a simulation for teaching of law students based in three different continents.

The final case study in this issue is from **Ramanjaneyulu Doosari** of Sharjah Performing Arts Academy, and describes work to scaffold the creative process in the teaching of performing arts students.

We hope you enjoy reading these case studies. We would like to thank all the authors for their time in sharing their inspirational work.

**Ian Hall, Jenny Tester and Tonya Watts**

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# Reflective micro-credentials give students an edge when applying for jobs

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Micro-credentials in higher education have become increasingly popular in recent years, although there is considerable diversity in their design and application (Ifenthaler et al, 2016; Kato et al, 2020). Since 2015, we have offered a suite of reflective micro-credentials, Deakin Hallmarks, across targeted courses (degree programmes) at Deakin University, Australia. Designed in collaboration with industry partners, they have given students a previously unavailable opportunity to curate and reflect on evidence to demonstrate how their employability skills and capabilities have developed across their degree, both within the course curriculum and in wider professional and community settings. Since the programme's inception, more than 20 course-specific micro-credentials have been offered in a range of disciplines, including environmental science, science, education, arts and commerce. This case study focuses on our environmental science micro-credential, with an emphasis on student outcomes, employer perceptions and impact on curriculum design.

## Micro-credential design

Although transferable skills are scaffolded across degree programmes at Deakin University, with all units (subjects) and courses (degree programmes) designed to achieve [key learning outcomes](#), students often find it challenging to articulate important employability skills. Furthermore, skills such as teamwork, communication or critical thinking are rarely made obvious on academic transcripts. Our initiative aimed to address this by asking students to showcase a particular employability skill through a digital portfolio of artefacts that demonstrate skill development. Our micro-credential in environmental science focused our attention on teamwork, given the importance of this skill in the environment profession.

Students in their second or third year of study are invited to submit a portfolio of curated evidence, together with a written reflection and one-minute video, to outline how they have achieved three standards:

- 1 Sustained and meaningful contribution to diverse teams
- 2 Significant impact of teamwork on the environment (within and beyond the course requirements)
- 3 Development or implementation of creative and innovative ideas or processes within a team.

Portfolios are assessed by a panel that includes industry representatives and graduates of the course. Successful applicants are awarded a digital micro-credential that can be showcased in job applications and professional digital profiles, verifying the recipient of the award, the issuer (Deakin University), industry partners, and what the recipient has achieved and evidenced in order to gain the award.

## Benefits for students and graduates

We have worked with students, graduates and employers to understand the impact of this credentialing strategy and found the benefits extend beyond the development of work-ready graduates.

In our paper [The potential of digital credentials to engage students with capabilities of importance to scholars and citizens](#) (Miller et al, 2020), we found that students appreciated the opportunity to showcase their achievements for an industry panel. While we expected students to value the process of documenting their employability skills, we also found they gained value from reflecting on their broader contributions to society and the environment, and the development of their professional identity.

“Working towards this Hallmark has been a foundational motivating factor for me to arrange my course units in a way that I had time where I could focus on teamwork activities. This has also allowed me to make sustainable and meaningful contributions to a diverse range of extra-curricular activities and teams, each contributing towards the overall objectives that drive my passions fuelled by altruism, compassion and sustainability.”

*(Student reflection, 2016; cited in Miller et al, 2020)*

With the implementation of our reflective micro-credential, together with a range of other work-integrated learning (WIL) initiatives in the course, we found the proportion of graduates in full-time employment more than doubled over a four-year period. While a relatively small proportion of the total cohort, recipients of the award notably achieved excellent employment outcomes, with more than 95% in full-time employment six months after graduation, and more than 80% in the environment profession.

## Employer perceptions

Through in-depth interviews, we found that employers are enthusiastic about any strategy that assists with graduate recruitment. However, our recent paper [Digital micro-credentials in environmental science: an employer perspective on valued evidence of skills](#) (Miller and Jorre de St Jorre, 2022) highlights the importance of ensuring that there is clarity on what micro-credentials mean and clear standards and rigour in their application.

“...having a mechanism that, in a sense, provides an objective demonstration of the person’s skill in that area, that has already been appraised against a high standard and found to meet that standard. I think that’s really, really valuable.”

*(Employer response, 2018; cited in Miller and Jorre de St Jorre, 2022)*

“I’d be like okay, that’s a nice badge to have but what’s the significance of it?”

*(Employer response, 2018; cited in Miller and Jorre de St Jorre, 2022)*

A recent publication by Universities Australia echoes these sentiments and outlines recommended standards to ensure portability of micro-credentials (Universities Australia, 2021).

Our own reflections on the micro-credential suggest that, although it provides a useful tool for employers when recruiting graduates, the real value lies in the process of students reflecting on their achievements, curating evidence to demonstrate these, and developing a sense of how they can use this information to develop their professional identity.

## Curriculum design

Introducing reflective micro-credentials to our courses has had a positive impact on curriculum design, specifically for enhancing WIL within courses. We have identified key touchpoints in units and courses where specific employability skills are developed, and we will continue to deepen this course-wide approach over the coming years.

Although our research has demonstrated that our micro-credentialing strategy has had a positive impact on student learning, it has only reached a relatively small number of students. While 97% of our students believed it would provide them with an advantage when applying for jobs, many felt they would not have sufficient evidence to meet the standards, nor the time to create their portfolio. To extend the benefits to all students enrolled in our undergraduate courses in [environmental science](#), the next step is to constructively align the micro-credential with units (subjects) and assessments. This will ensure all students have the opportunity to reflect on the development of their employability skills, and collect evidence to show this development, from the first day of their course.

Our work suggests that reflective micro-credentials, when positioned as part of an authentic, coherent and constructively aligned WIL curriculum, can lead to enhanced, and demonstrable, learning, satisfaction and employment outcomes.

## Acknowledgements

Thank you to everyone who has been involved in the development and implementation of reflective micro-credentials (Deakin Hallmarks) at Deakin University. In particular, thanks to Trina Jorre de St Jorre, Liz Johnson, Jan West, Malcolm Campbell and Beverley Oliver. Special thanks to our industry partners, in particular Jack Krohn; and all students and graduates who have been involved in the programme. Thank you to Advance HE for supporting this case study through the Global Impact Grants scheme.



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# Smart Casual – identifying and responding to a national need for discipline- specific teacher development resources for sessional law teachers

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More than a decade ago I was asked to take over delivery of the twice-yearly introductory workshop offered to new sessional staff commencing teaching into the law curriculum at the University of Adelaide. I was a junior academic, passionate about teaching, who had just finished one graduate certificate in tertiary education and was halfway through a second one. I was a perfect choice for the role. I agreed.

However, when I started, I realised that the workshops were predominately administratively focused. They covered how to respond to a fire alarm, submit an online pay claim and access the law library. Very little time was dedicated to addressing pedagogical issues nor triaging common challenges experienced by novice teachers. And the teaching-focused materials towards which I could direct these newest members of our educational team were generic, with a wonderfully irrelevant focus on how to respond to laboratory chemical spills. In fact, I discovered that there were almost no discipline-specific teaching development resources available in Australia, let alone resources designed for and accessible to sessional law teachers. In a context where sessional staff undertake up to 60% of law teaching (Percy et al, 2008), this stuck me as problematic for law teachers and students.

Being junior and energetic, I secured a small internal university grant to create discipline-specific, teaching-focused workbooks. Each workbook engaged with pedagogical scholarship on a topic relevant to teaching law: teaching problem solving, engaging students and feedback strategies. They were designed to introduce sessional teachers to pedagogical literatures and facilitate application of principles drawn from scholarship through a 'Q&A' format. The workbooks were well received by sessional staff who appreciated their legal focus (no large-animal handling precautions were included). However, they were both limited in scope and clunky in format.

Knowing more was needed I approached colleagues (each of whom were much more senior than I) from other university law schools. I pitched a project to create a series of teacher development resources, which were rooted in pedagogical literature, advocated best teaching practice, and would be freely available to sessional law teachers around Australia. I will be endlessly grateful that Prof Mark Israel, Dr Mary Heath and Dr Natalie Skead bought into my mad vision. As a team we secured competitive national funding<sup>1</sup> and commenced the 'Smart Casual' Project.

To inform Smart Casual we undertook empirical research into what existing resources existed (few), how many were teaching focused and discipline specific (even fewer) and what, if any, development opportunities sessional law teachers wanted. We found that that sessional law teachers wanted to engage with development that was relevant, accessible, time-efficient and flexible.<sup>2</sup> Inspired by this, and soul-searching debates about the most important teaching foci and thematic issues to be addressed, we prioritised three key elements of teaching: providing feedback; facilitating student engagement; teaching problem solving and providing constructive feedback. Following an iterative process of construction, review, trial, refinement and evaluation, we produced interactive online

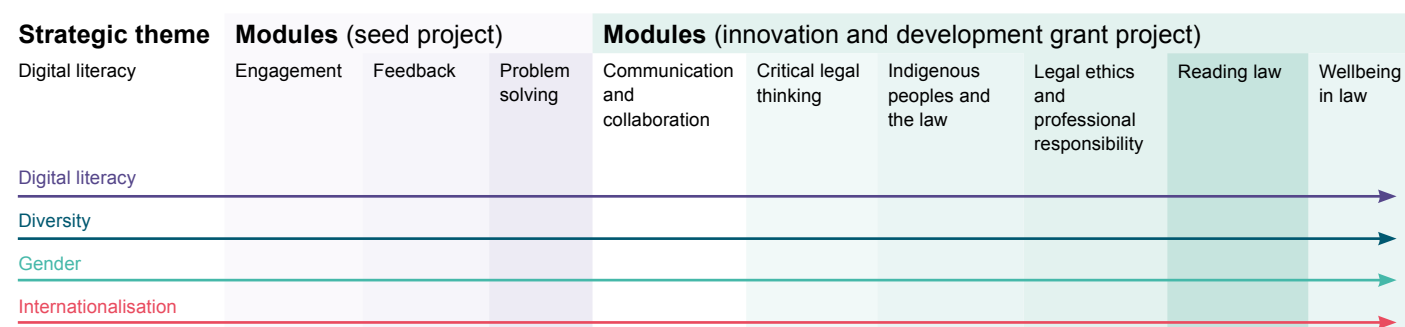
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1 National Office for Learning and Teaching Seed Grant SD-13-2745

2 You can read the project report from this project, with details of the empirical methodology, literature review and resource design process, here: [https://ltr.edu.au/resources/SD13\\_2745\\_Hewitt\\_final%20report\\_2014.pdf](https://ltr.edu.au/resources/SD13_2745_Hewitt_final%20report_2014.pdf)

modules on each of these topics. All were deeply rooted in pedagogical scholarship, featured the voices of sessional teachers, and were designed to be used in a range of contexts. However, as a team we realised that our project was incomplete. We had made a start, but four modules did not adequately respond to the development needs that inspired the project. We therefore extended our team to include Prof Alex Steel and Dr Kate Galloway, on the principle that a diversity of perspectives adds richness to any endeavour, and applied for further funding.<sup>3</sup> Then we spent two further years refining what we already had and creating additional modules.<sup>4</sup> At the end of that process we had produced a suite of nine online professional development modules for sessional law teachers, each of which integrated four strategic themes critical to the teaching and practice of law: diversity, gender, internationalisation and digital literacy. You can access the resources at <https://smartcasualawteacher.org/author/smartcasualaw/>.

**Figure 1. Integration of strategic themes across the Smart Casual modules**



Next, we need to promote the resources and ensure they were used. First, we had the project externally evaluated. Armed with a positive evaluation, members of the Smart Casual team attended Council of Australian Law Deans (CALD) and the Legal Education Associate Deans (LEAD) Network meetings to conduct briefings. Both organisations endorsed the resources and agreed to promote them. To make adopting them as obstacle free as possible, we created supplementary tools, such as template invitations for staff participation, promotional material and guidance about how Smart Casual could be integrated into a broader teacher development programme.<sup>5</sup>

We successfully persuaded the leadership of legal education that what we had created had value. Smart Casual was described as “the most important thing happening in Australian legal education at the moment” (Dean of Law, Professor Nick James, Bond University, Australia) and “a model of how to develop resources for legal educators, and what professional development for legal educators should look like, in any jurisdiction” (Distinguished Professor of Practice – Legal Education, Professor Maharg, Osgoode Hall, Canada). This helped enormously in ensuring the resources were used; they have now been integrated into professional development schemes in many law schools in Australia and elsewhere.

3 National Office for Learning and Teaching Grant ID14-4320

4 For information about this incarnation of the project, see our final report at: [https://ltr.edu.au/resources/ID14-4320\\_Nettle\\_Flinders\\_ReportSmartCasual.pdf](https://ltr.edu.au/resources/ID14-4320_Nettle_Flinders_ReportSmartCasual.pdf)

5 Find these resources here: <https://smartcasualawteacher.org/coordinators/>



Free online professional development  
designed by and for Australian legal academics.

Sessional teachers play a crucial role in legal education in Australia. They bring vital skills, experience, research engagement, commitment to student learning, and professional networks to their teaching.

Smart Casual's suite of interactive, self-directed professional development resources can help you:

- develop your students' legal reading skills
- foster critical legal thinking
- provide quality feedback
- increase your students' engagement
- strengthen legal problem solving
- increase awareness about Indigenous peoples and the law
- encourage legal ethics and professional responsibility
- strengthen students' communication and collaboration skills
- support the wellbeing of students and teachers.

The Smart Casual modules are available when you need them at

[SmartLawTeacher.org](http://SmartLawTeacher.org)

@smartcasualaw  
smart.casual@flinders.edu.au



Funding for this project has been provided by the Australian Government Office for Learning and Teaching.

This case study may inspire you to access and use the Smart Casual resources, which remain relevant and useful. However, it is also intended to demonstrate that projects with significant impact often start small; with a passionate academic working to solve a local problem. It also displays the value of teamwork. The involvement of others in Smart Casual fundamentally transformed it into something richer, more useful and more exciting than one person could have achieved.

The problem that started this journey: a lack of discipline-specific teaching development resources accessible to sessional law teachers. The (dual) outcomes: high-quality tools to support sessional colleagues in the national legal academy, and, personally, a series of enriching relationships with diverse colleagues who became friends as we laboured together for a common goal.

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# iSAP: integrating Science and Practice

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**Allie Ford, SFHEA**, Senior Educational Designer, Faculty of Medicine, Nursing and Health Sciences. The iSAP team consists of Marilyn Baird, emeritus professor, Dr Allie Ford, Dr Liesl Heinrich and Dr Kirsten Schliephake

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## How do we bridge the theory-practice gap?

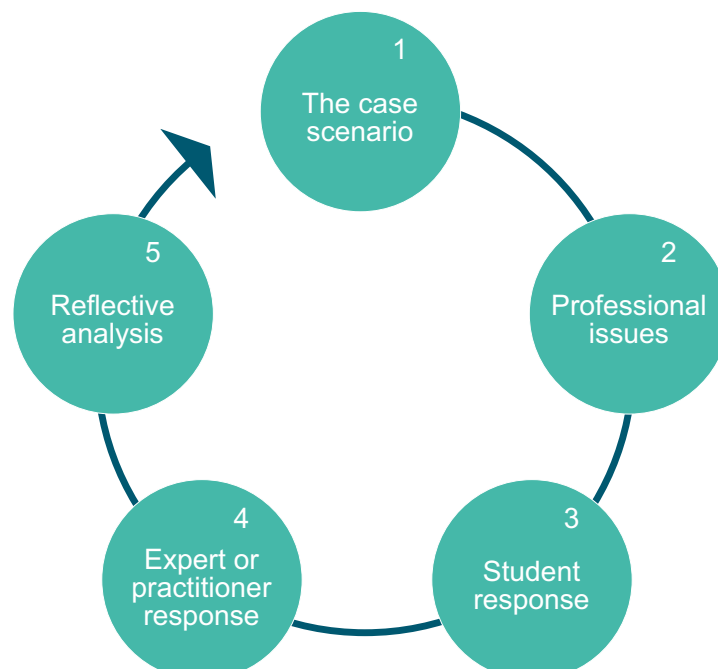
In the early 2000s, one of our team, Professor Marilyn Baird, became increasingly concerned by a gap her radiography students showed between their ability to discuss theory in the classroom, and their ability to apply the same ideas on placement or in practice. This theory-practice gap is well represented in literature and covers diverse disciplines (Scully, 2011; Johnson, 2014).

Marilyn developed an approach, informed by Laurillard, Baud and Dewey, that not only presented students with theory, but sought to help them connect it with the messy and complex real-world situations they would encounter in practice. Fast forward several years and the approach solidified as iSAP: integrating Science and Practice.

## What is iSAP?

iSAP, or integrating Science and Practice, is a flexible five-step framework (see Figure 1) for learning and assessment.

**Figure 1. The five iSAP elements: (1) case scenario, (2) professional issues, (3) student response, (4) expert or practitioner response, (5) reflective analysis.**





The first three steps are common to many case-study tasks that students may complete: accessing a case scenario or trigger, identifying issues present and preparing a response. It was the addition of two steps to the end of this process that gave iSAP its power: after completing their own response, students access an expert or practitioner response to the same case, then compare the responses with a brief reflection.

“It helps students see the reality coming up. Most case studies stop at the discussion, but iSAP gives a sense of completion. It validates the work and reading that they’ve done.”

*First-year coordinator, Faculty of Education*

## How is iSAP used?

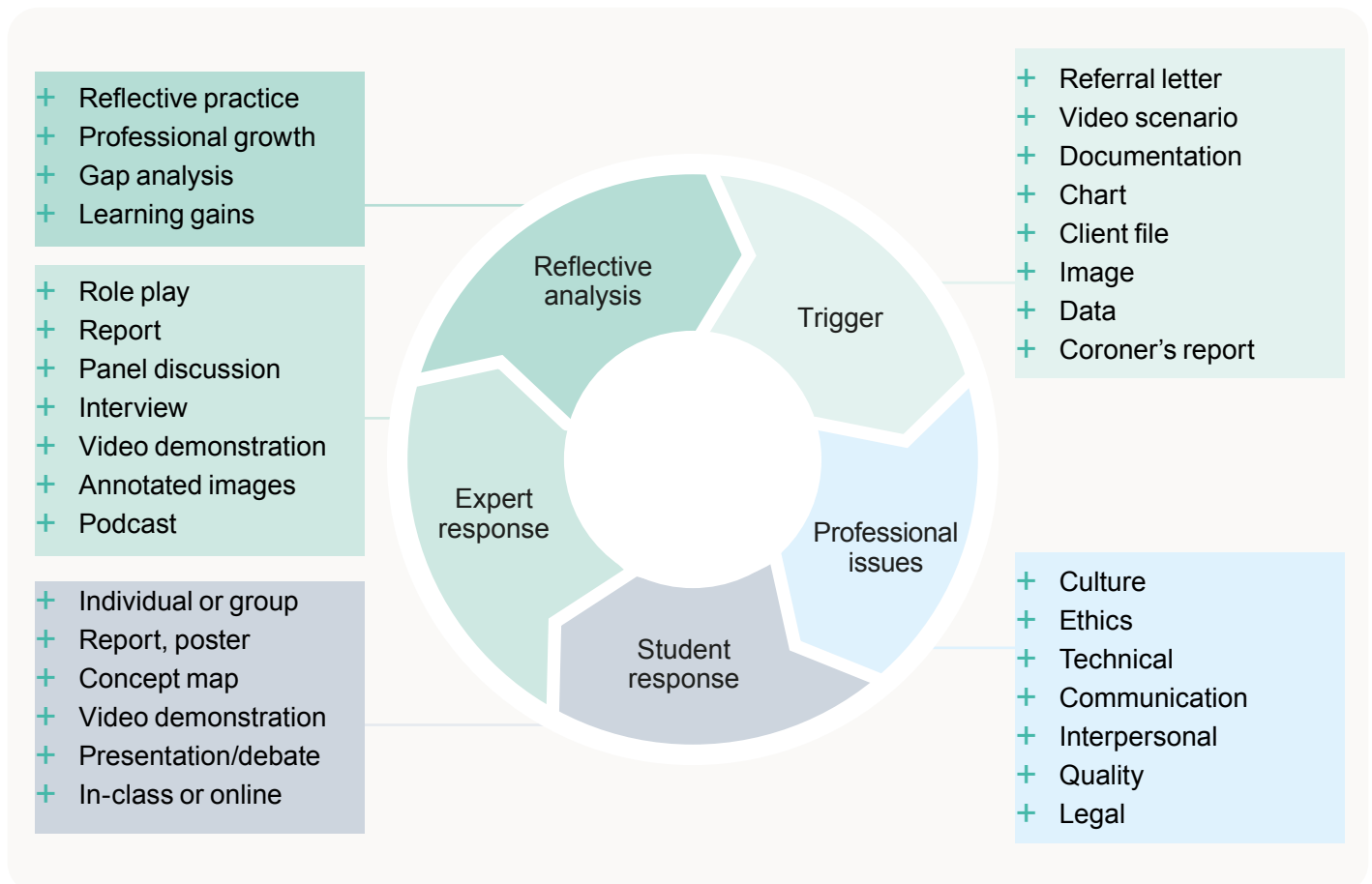
The iSAP framework’s strength comes from its flexibility (Figure 2). The case study, student response, expert response and reflective analysis can take any format that suits the learning outcomes. Initially, many case triggers comprised text descriptions and related x-ray images for students to evaluate in a written response. The expert response would also be a formal written report. More recently, as more subject areas have come on board, staff have asked ‘what about...?’ and ‘would it be possible to...?’. The iSAP approach, itself being something perceived as new and different, has been a key player in giving staff ‘permission’ to experiment and try new things in their teaching and assessment designs.

Now we have case triggers that incorporate videos, posters, prescriptions, coroners’ reports and even simulated patient case files.

The tasks students complete are also diverse, eg:

- + making their own videos to ‘continue’ a simulation from the point where the trigger left off, eg paramedic students ‘managing’ a patient on arrival at a scene
- + conducting a simulated initial client interview based on a referral letter case trigger (nutrition and dietetics)
- + developing concept maps exploring issues and factors present in a video showing flawed patient care (nursing and midwifery)
- + preparing management plans to minimise infection risk when asked to x-ray a fracture in a patient with suspected monkeypox (radiography).

**Figure 2. An indication of the variety of approaches for each step**



Expert responses have also taken a variety of forms. Written reports are provided where modelling the report format, tone and writing style are important as well as the content. In other contexts, the responses include:

- + annotated diagrams
- + simulated multi-disciplinary team case conference videos
- + recorded discussions between professionals from different areas of expertise (eg a specialist renal health nurse from a large teaching hospital, an indigenous healthcare worker and a rural nurse practitioner)
- + a recorded phone conversation between the unit coordinator and an overseas colleague who was a world expert in the specific topic.

Finally, even the reflective step has taken on various forms. While many cases use a standard template to scaffold students through the comparison, reflection and learning plan aspects, other educators have chosen to ask students to prepare short videos or research material to fill a learning gap identified from the comparison.

## Does it work?

At the start of 2016, nine units in four discipline areas were using iSAP. By the end of 2020, this had risen to 72 units across 14 discipline areas, with more than 3600 students (28% of those enrolled in our faculty) engaging with one or more cases during the year. Cases have now also been developed and used within our Education faculty, our Education Academy (which provides professional development for our university educators), and at several institutions overseas.

Between 2018 and 2020, 221 students responded to a survey. Of respondents, 96.8% said cases helped them integrate theory with professional decision making, and 96.7% noted that their understanding of the topic had increased after accessing the expert response.

iSAP cases are also regularly mentioned in university student satisfaction surveys, and in course reviews. Feedback from staff, students and stakeholders has all been resoundingly positive. Some example comments include:

“It’s scalable. We can use it with large numbers of students, and we don’t have to rely on educators to be experts in Indigenous health. We actually create an expert response, so it means that in classrooms, if an educator doesn’t know a lot about Indigenous health, they can still teach.”

*Director – Indigenous Health Unit*

“In 2019, ...the [clinical] educators reinforced the importance of iSAP beyond the classroom. I proposed a change to the topic for the iSAP... The educators were not in favour of a change... They agreed the iSAP had been an effective teaching strategy – management of paracetamol overdose had previously been ‘taught’ by a toxicologist, in the classroom, without the same application in the clinical setting.”

*Emergency nursing stream lead educator*

“My medical history was pretty terrible. I misunderstood what I needed to write for this question, I think I was thinking of the intervention notes. It was helpful to read the medical note entry, especially as I was at [hospital] for my placement and we weren’t allowed to keep the notes, so it’s really useful to see how it should be laid out before clinical placement begins next year.”

*Student reflection (shared with permission).*

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# Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit to combat human trafficking simulation

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The Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) summit to combat human trafficking simulation was held by associate professor Clara Chapdelaine-Feliciati at Xi'an Jiaotong-Liverpool University in Suzhou, China on 29 April and 6 May 2022. It was conducted online on three continents – Asia, Africa and Europe – and ran for five hours.

Second-year students acted as state representatives and presented measures adopted by their country to tackle human trafficking in the following fields: 1) criminal justice; 2) collaboration for travel and borders; 3) awareness-raising; 4) training professionals; 5) tourism industry. They were asked to underscore how their country fulfils its duty of due diligence under the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2015). Students were assigned one of the 10 ASEAN state members – Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Cambodia, Brunei Darussalam, Vietnam, Myanmar, Lao PDR, the Philippines and Singapore.

The objective of the simulation was to provide experiential education to students so they could learn firsthand the modus operandi of international meetings and formal interactions between state delegates. It required students to engage with primary sources, notably regional treaties, and identify best practices at the domestic level. Students also learned about different legal systems; how domestic measures impact regional cooperation and realised the importance of regional partnerships to address regional and global issues. The methodology applied in this simulation was the semiotics of law, defined as the study of signs and symbols in law, both as concerns legal instruments, such as regional treaties, and the meaning-intention of 'master signifiers' such as state representatives. It was inspired, in part, by Professor Chapdelaine-Feliciati's chapter, 'Students Making Meaning – Teaching Legal Semiotics in the Context of International Law', in Fleerackers et al (forthcoming 2022).

As noted by Professor Chapdelaine-Feliciati,

“Human trafficking is a serious issue that threatens nations' security and that of their populations, and requires significant bilateral, regional, and international cooperation. This is an ideal case study as students learn to identify ways in which ASEAN member states can join forces and put disagreements aside to reach an important common goal: the elimination of human trafficking, especially of women and children, in the region”.

During the preparation of the summit, Professor Chapdelaine-Feliciati referred to her own experience conducting research on child trafficking and participating in international meetings with state delegates and UN institutions while working as project officer for the UNICEF Office of Research in Florence, Italy and the UN Committee on the Rights of the Child in Geneva, Switzerland.

Students improved their research skills as they studied the implementation of the *ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children (2015)* at the domestic level. They also enhanced their public speaking and leadership skills for their presentations and when answering difficult questions from other member states. The challenge of this simulation was compounded by the fact that it took place in English while many students are Chinese or international

students who are not native English speakers. Professor Chapdelaine-Feliciati has experience teaching international law in both French and English at York University in Canada and thus expertise on how to address difficulties in legal terminology across languages. This practical experience was extremely successful on three grounds.

Firstly, students increased their engagement with the material and overall performance in the course. They developed teamwork when allocating tasks and in the preparation leading to the summit.

Secondly, students reported how this activity played a significant role in preparing them for careers in diplomacy, as demonstrated by their positive qualitative reviews. They appreciated the practical experience, noting that the role play was “*very interesting and valuable*”, “*a collaborative learning experience*”, “*novel, well designed and fun*”, and a great way to put their “*knowledge into practice*”. One student wrote “*I participated in a role play in an international conference, which was a new experience and made me better understand the process and discussion mode of international communication*”. Moreover, student satisfaction increased to 4.63 out of 5.

Thirdly, this case study was added as department news to attract students and has already received positive feedback.

Overall, Professor Chapdelaine-Feliciati remarked the following:

“I was very impressed by how professional the students were throughout this activity. Students were very engaged, answered difficult questions, and were ‘in character’ throughout the simulation. They conducted significant research on the implementation of the ASEAN Convention Against Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children at the domestic level, which was also useful for their final essay on this topic”.

As professors and higher education institutions aim to increase student engagement and participation during online and hybrid learning, case studies such as this simulation can be employed to achieve improved research and public speaking skills as well as teamwork. Moreover, such a case study can assist in building a sense of community and belonging for students within the virtual classroom across continents, cultures and languages. Professor Chapdelaine-Feliciati will teach this pedagogical approach on hybrid and online teaching at the university level for the Higher Education Academy Post Graduate Certificate.

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# Scaffolding the Creative Process of Theatre Lab Performance

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“Everything is okay..”

“We all agree; in different accents or in different tongues, it doesn’t matter.  
We all say the same thing: this is how it’s supposed to be.  
What matters is, that we are all in it together..”

*This student-devised play begins with a Palindrome Poetry script as a structure.*

A five-week intensive and collaborative Theatre Lab project was developed with BA students from May to June 2022 at the Sharjah Performing Arts Academy (SPAA), United Arab Emirates. It involved a group of 11 undergraduate students, with multicultural backgrounds from different parts of the world, including the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region, on three different programmes of BA Acting, Musical Theatre and Production Arts.

At the end of the first year of this Theatre Lab course, students devise a new 20 to 30 minute production using various sources and applying techniques learned throughout their first year. The approach is much like a ‘real’ devised production, and students undertake research, try ideas out, fail, succeed, keep making, pare down, and discover the essence and structure of the piece. This process is then more tightly structured, refined and rehearsed before performing.

Each of us is an individual being, and that is what makes us unique. During the creative process of developing performance, our unique qualities make us scatter to build interpersonal relationships with peer learners.

In 1926, Graham Wallas theorised one of the earliest formulations of the creative process in four simple stages: preparation, incubation, illumination and verification. The following process occurred when we applied this basic creative process structure to our devised theatre production.

1. *Preparation stage:* the creative process initially begins with typically vague, even confusing, excitement or another preverbal intimation of approaching a perceived problem. We experienced this while developing this process. We began our first day of the project sitting in a circle and reading the project’s learning outcomes. Then, we discussed our project stimulus word “Gasping for Air”, and brainstormed ideas around it. The team was divided into performers and a supportive team.
2. *Incubation stage:* each student has unique qualities as a singer, actor, stage manager or technician. After distributing their responsibilities, each brought unique ideas to the table. The conversation went to excitement, then to nervousness, to questions, discussion, disagreements, and pushing back on each other’s ideas and everyone scattered. At this stage, a few students took their focus off the problem and allowed their minds to rest. What is happening here is that, on one side, the conscious mind was wandering. On another side, the unconscious engages in what Einstein called “combinatory play”. They were creating diverse ideas and inspiration, finding new ways to bring them together.

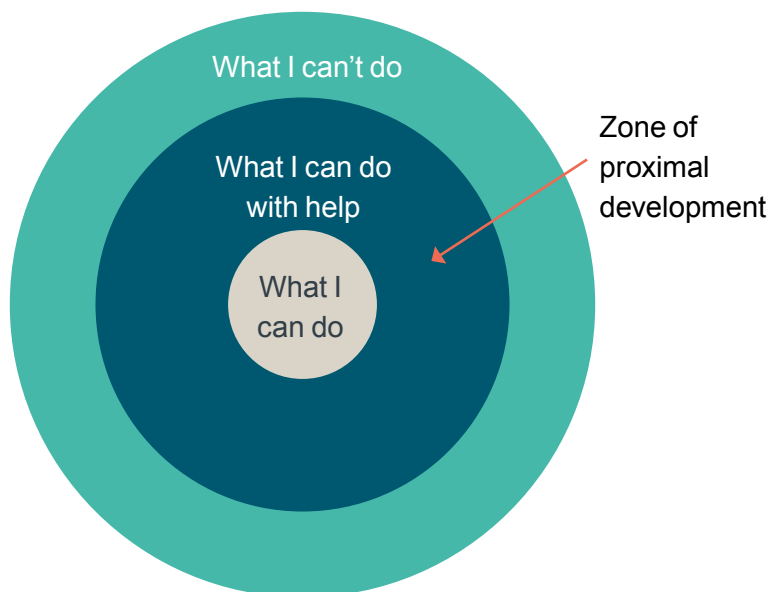


3. *Illumination stage*: at this elusive eureka moment, every student got the best idea in their own way, and very few were ready to agree and perceive it from others' perspectives. Due to cherry-picking of the ideas, a few focused on smaller pictures instead of the bigger picture of the performance.

While they were at this stage, I observed them and stepped into the process. Being a mentor is necessary to scaffold them from this illumination to become an ensemble and to make them confident; it is the key to learning. If students lack confidence, then they will struggle to be independent. During this process, I used various scaffolding methods to bring them together. Before examining the further details of this process, it is worth looking briefly at the underlying theory of scaffolding.

Psychologist Lev Vygotsky developed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) and the Vygotsky theory of cognitive development. He emphasises that learning is social and happens by interacting with our environment.

Scaffolding can be described as *“those elements of the task that are initially beyond the learner’s capacity, thus permitting him to concentrate upon and complete only those elements that are within his range of competence”* (Wood, 1976).



For effective scaffolding, the teacher needs to know their students well. By having a clear picture of prior attainment and understanding each student's ZPD, I realise what is precisely required for every learner's need. For example, some were too attached to their creative ideas and didn't want to lose them, and some did not have any ideas beyond disagreeing and saying 'no'. To understand every individual better, I listened carefully to where exactly they were struggling and offered support to them.

In the mix of techniques, I included:

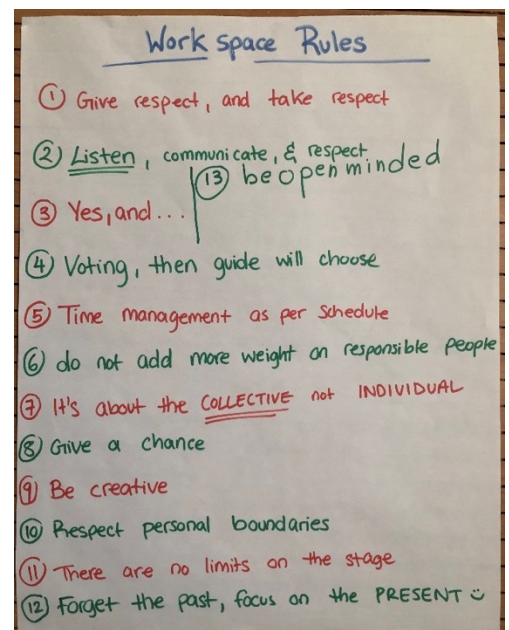
- + giving specific tasks to attain: eg what is the first task to try out?
- + offering general encouragement: individual and group
- + encouraging peer support: making small teams
- + individual coaching and mini lessons: when a student was struggling with a new topic
- + breaking large tasks into smaller steps
- + providing visual and literature aids.

In making an ensemble, my role as a pedagogue is to select which specific approach is most useful for these students within our project's time limit. At the same time, I resisted the urge to offer too much help.

4. *Verification stage*: following the eureka moment, the scaffolding approach took a precise shape. The vision of the performance landed and committed to colours, shapes and choreography. The Palindrome Poetry script developed.

Outcomes at this stage:

- + students gained many clear ideas with support and encouragement, and they focused on their immediate tasks autonomously
- + with the help of a peer member, individuals gained benefits from More Knowing Others (MKO) in ZPD
- + I helped them create workspace rules by themselves, where everyone jotted down one rule for the whole class
- + 'yes and' exercise: we cultivated 'yes and' positive attitude, which helped everyone to move forward when they got stuck with the elimination of 'no, but'
- + dissected more significant tasks into smaller steps so students found a more accessible step-by-step approach to reaching each milestone



Quotes from the students:

“Our tutor was supportive from my point of view; his presence contributed to the development of my personality and made me feel confident in myself and my accent and made me focus on acting...”

“...I genuinely believe that this was (for the most part) a collaborative effort equally divided among us all. I am so pleased to say that many people surprised me with their dedication and attentiveness throughout the process...”



In the end, the actual process of creativity became collective, and the cognitive-behavioural human approach culminated in the creation of the final, 20-minute long “Everything is okay” performance. Through this artwork, the learner has recognised their collaborator’s role by not only a personification but also two-way interaction with certain members of the group and the whole creative group becoming integrated with the performance of the production.



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