

EQUITY, DIVERSITY AND ONLINE LEARNING IN PEER ASSISTED STUDY SESSIONS

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BACKGROUND

While Peer Assisted Study Sessions (PASS) are a well-established undergraduate academic assistance program running in many Australasian universities (Woolrych et al., 2020), Edith Cowan University's (ECU) program is unique in how key training and operational aspects were developed in response to the specific needs of its diverse student cohort, including online and regional students. Notably, ECU's PASS program was an early adopter of the hybrid delivery model (on-campus and online) to support cohort equitably and inclusively.

IMPACT

Students who attend PASS sessions are 11% more likely to succeed than non-participants and 8.6% more likely to be retained in their degree. The impact of PASS on success rates is even higher for key equity cohorts, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander students, students living with a disability, and students enrolled in pathway programs.

RELEVANCE

In this session, we will discuss techniques for online facilitation that supports students to succeed, including developing and enhancing learning skills, identifying students to model discussion, question design, learning through play, and strategically using online tools to match the cohort. We will also discuss how STEM lecturers can work with PASS to improve outcomes, including embedding, promoting, and building a relationship with their PASS leaders.

REFERENCE

Woolrych, T. J., Zaccagnini, M. A., Stephens, M., Stace, M. J., Middleton, R., Bergner, M. L., O'Sullivan, S. M., & Verma, R. (2020). *Into the Online Space: Outcomes for a PASS Online Pilot Across Different First Year University Subjects*. Faculty of Science, Medicine and Health Papers: Part B. Retrieved from <https://ro.uow.edu.au/smhpapers1/1253>

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