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Design 4 Diversity: Enhancing interprofessional learning for architecture and occupational therapy students

Susan Ang, Stephen Segrave, Helen Larkin, Hisham Elkadi, Val Watchorn, Merrin McCracken, Dale Holt and Danielle Hitch

Deakin University, Australia

There is a growing national and international interest in inclusive design, its application to the built environment and to other environmental contexts. Significant local and global initiatives place inclusive design practice at the forefront of the political and social agenda and there is a growing demand for work-ready graduates in new and emerging areas of employment. This paper outlines a project being undertaken in 2010 at Deakin University that is embedding teaching in relation to inclusive and universal design into the curricula of undergraduate architecture and occupational therapy students. Inter-professional teaching using online resources (including the development of a Second Life environment) and face-to-face approaches have been developed and the project is informed through consultation with key community and industry stakeholders. Mapping of the curricula and trialing of the teaching resources and approaches will identify opportunities beyond 2010 for sustainable inter-professional teaching across the two programs; the embedding of inclusive design practice in architecture and occupational therapy education; and, the opportunities for inter-professional work integrated learning opportunities beyond 2010. A key component of this project, using a pre and post questionnaire methodology, is the evaluation of students' knowledge regarding inclusive design practice and their experience with the teaching resources. Work and data collected to date as part of the evaluation will be presented in this paper. The project addresses a current gap in inter-professional learning both locally and internationally and aims to better prepare students with the skills and knowledge that reflect current and future workforce demands.