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Abstract 16

Interprofessional education of occupational therapy and architecture students – the journey so far

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

Introduction: Effective interprofessional practice between occupational therapists and architects can be viewed as a way of enhancing environmental design and positively influencing the health and wellbeing of environmental users. This belief is shared by the architects, occupational therapists and education specialists who have come together to work on a project that embeds interprofessional teaching and learning activities on universal design into the curricula of undergraduate architecture and occupational therapy courses at Deakin University. With the long-term aim of enhancing the skills, knowledge and attitudes of future architecture and occupational therapy graduates the project team have worked to develop and trial teaching and learning resources for architecture and occupational therapy students on universal design; explore and identify sustainable opportunities for architecture and occupational therapy students to learn about universal design practice within a framework of interprofessional education; and to explore and identify sustainable partnerships with key stakeholders that will support ongoing interprofessional research and work integrated learning opportunities.

Methods: A comprehensive literature review has been conducted in the areas of universal design, interprofessional education, education and training on universal design and the use of Second Life™ in education. This information has been used to guide the development of shared intended learning outcomes, shared online learning resources and the interprofessional delivery of educational material into both courses. To guide future interprofessional education in this area information has also been gathered from key stakeholders by means of focus groups and telephone interviews. Feedback and evaluation of the student learning experience will be gathered using pre and post evaluation surveys.

Results: This paper shall present preliminary findings from this project. This will include qualitative data gathered from key stakeholders and evaluation material gathered from students.

Discussion: A key finding from the literature review acknowledges a need for interdisciplinary education in the area of universal design, yet few examples of this can be found. Issues such as timetabling, staff engagement, and differing use of terminology are all acknowledged as challenges to interprofessional education and have been reflected in the experience of the researchers involved in this project. Yet despite these challenges, the interprofessional team of academics involved in this project have developed a range of blended learning materials for use by first year architecture students and third year occupational therapy students. Modes of learning have included online materials, a face-to-face interprofessional workshop, and simulation activities conducted both in real life and in the virtual environment Second Life™. Opportunities have also been identified for future interprofessional education and research.