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Exploring inter-professional and inter-industry education: Outcomes and future directions
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There is growing interest in inclusive design and its application to built environments and a demand for work-ready graduates in this emerging area of practice. This paper reports findings from a study that evaluated inter-professional educational experiences for architecture and occupational therapy students; an approach not previously reported in the literature. The aims of the study were to: evaluate the experiences of students in relation to the inter-professional teaching and learning; measure the level of students’ self-reported readiness for inter-professional learning; and, measure the level of students’ self-reported achievement of intended learning outcomes. Teaching initiatives included a range of face-to-face teaching activities and virtual and ‘real life’ simulations. Qualitative and quantitative data was collected and the Readiness for Interprofessional Learning Scale (RIPLS) was used to measure students’ attitudes to inter-professional learning. Significant differences were found between students on the RIPLS. Occupational therapy students had significantly higher scores in relation to inter-professional readiness, although the gap narrowed at post-assessment. Occupational therapy students also showed a trend to become less positive about the benefits of inter-professional education after their experience. Students reported limited previous use of Second Life™ which impacted on their comfort with, and value attributed to, this medium. This study has informed future directions for embedding universal design practice into the curriculum of architecture and occupational therapy students. It also raises key questions about how learning experiences such as ‘real life’ simulations can be maintained within the context of massification of higher education and increasing off-campus enrolments.