VICTORIA UNIVERSITY
LEARNING AND TEACHING SYMPOSIUM

Good practice and messy problems

29 September, 2016
City Flinders Campus
Victoria University
300 Flinders St, Melbourne

Follow on Twitter at #VULTsymp
For further information: CCLT@vu.edu.au
# PROGRAM

## 8.45am  REGISTRATION, ARRIVAL TEA / COFFEE AND VISUAL PRESENTATIONS  LEVEL 12

## 9.15am  WELCOME AND KEYNOTE ADDRESS  LEVEL 11:01

## 10.15am  CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS – SESSION 1

### SESSION 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A      |      | Student engagement and transition: Developing ‘philosophies of practice’ with first year Sport Coaching students as professional and academic induction | Karen Lawrence  
College of Health & Biomedicine | Juanita Cusack¹ and Daryl Marchant²  
¹Academic Support & Development  
²College of Sport & Exercise Science |
| B      |      | Academics blending and flipping: Learning to teach together, shifting the locus of control and making different spaces to co-construct knowledge | Amanda Carr  
College of Arts | Mark Selling, Kim Keamy, Vicky Plows and Dung Tran  
College of Education |
| C      |      | Bridging two worlds: Using diverse students’ cultural lifeworlds as assets for disciplinary learning | Lidia Xynas  
College of Law & Justice | Angela Daddow¹ and Britta Schneider²  
¹College of Arts  
²Academic Support & Development |
| D      |      | Discussion includes outcomes of an eLearning, pedagogy and emerging educational technologies PD program and a First Year Experience survey online tool and outcomes | Ralph Kiel  
University Librarian | Frances O’Neil  
University Library  
Alan McWilliams¹, Fiona Henderson² and Gavin Lees¹  
¹College of Business  
²Academic Support & Development |
| E      |      | Student engagement with industry through personal branding in social media | Tony Watt  
College of Education | Paul Hawking  
College of Business |

## 11am  MORNING TEA AND VISUAL PRESENTATIONS  LEVEL 12

## 11.30am  CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS – SESSION 2

### SESSION 2

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A      |      | Fellow travellers in a strange land: diversity, collaboration, and community in first year foundations | Andrew Smallridge  
College of Engineering & Science | Julie Fletcher¹ and Pauline O’Malley²  
¹College of Arts  
²Academic Support & Development |
| B      |      | Blended Learning and the BEd (P-12): the challenges and triumphs of using digital technologies in large courses | Terry Hallahan  
College of Business | Peter Thomas, Helen Wiadop Quinton, Amanda Muscat, Marcelle Cacciattolo and Susan Ferguson with Emma Garner, Michael Marmion, Dustin Peebles, Alex Sorensen and Niela White  
College of Education |
| C      |      | Mentoring our PhD students as budding academics through the Learning Through Teaching program (LTP) @VU: A response to a messy problem | Peter Hartley  
College of Health & Biomedicine | Teresa De Fazio¹ with Panel Members: Fiona Henderson¹, Miguel Giff², Sille Harries³, Aaron Peterson⁴, Luca Crippi⁴, Alessandro Garofolini⁴, Gayani Samarawickrama⁴, Nick Owen⁵, Vasambal Manikam⁶  
¹Academic Support & Development  
²Student Transition and Retention  
³College of Business  
⁴College of Engineering and Science  
⁵CCLT  
⁶College of Health and Biomedicine |
### SESSION 2 CONTINUED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>D Information Management</td>
<td>11:10</td>
<td>Evaluation of the effect on graded clinical competencies when clinical placements are partially replaced by simulated learning (SL) videos for year 3 student osteopaths: a pilot study</td>
<td>Tracy Denning&lt;br&gt;College of Health &amp; Biomedicine</td>
<td>Kylie Fitzgerald with Reid Mountney and Ema Stanic&lt;br&gt;College of Health &amp; Biomedicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Student engagement</td>
<td>11:24</td>
<td>Goals – using gamification to engage students in first year engineering physics</td>
<td>Brenda Krenus&lt;br&gt;Centre for Collaborative Learning &amp; Teaching</td>
<td>Thinh Nguyen with John Psaila&lt;br&gt;College of Engineering &amp; Science</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 12.15pm CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS – SESSION 3

### SESSION 3

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Transition Strategy Roundtable</td>
<td>11:24</td>
<td>Discussion includes transition into doctoral research, from non-traditional backgrounds to university and pedagogical approaches</td>
<td>Susan Young&lt;br&gt;Office of the Dean of Students</td>
<td>Rose Lucas, Ron Adams and Amanda Pearce&lt;br&gt;Graduate Research Centre&lt;br&gt;Elaine Speight-Burton and Gabriella Pretto&lt;br&gt;Academic Support &amp; Development&lt;br&gt;Jacinta Richards and Karen Charman&lt;br&gt;Student Transition &amp; Retention</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B Blended learning</td>
<td>11:06</td>
<td>Engaging students and hearing their voice in the online environment</td>
<td>Kim Keamy&lt;br&gt;College of Education</td>
<td>Natasha Dwyer and Maree Keating&lt;br&gt;College of Arts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C Student Success and Retention</td>
<td>10:49</td>
<td>A school for scandal? Using society’s misdeeds to teach Academic Integrity to first year Business students</td>
<td>Karen Lawrence&lt;br&gt;College of Health &amp; Biomedicine</td>
<td>Fiona Henderson&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt; and Alan McWilliams&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;&lt;br&gt;&lt;sup&gt;1&lt;/sup&gt;Academic Support &amp; Development&lt;br&gt;&lt;sup&gt;2&lt;/sup&gt;College of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D Work integrated learning</td>
<td>11:10</td>
<td>Undergraduate nursing student perceptions of a supervised self-directed learning laboratory for enhancing workplace preparedness</td>
<td>Su Robertson&lt;br&gt;College of Law &amp; Justice</td>
<td>Debra Kerr, Jennifer Ratcliff, Lisa Tabb and Ruby Walter&lt;br&gt;College of Health &amp; Biomedicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Student engagement</td>
<td>11:09</td>
<td>‘You can’t learn how to swim without getting wet’: A case study from VU-Timor Leste Study Tour</td>
<td>Amanda Carr&lt;br&gt;College of Arts</td>
<td>Siew Fang Law with Joey Rebakis&lt;br&gt;College of Arts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

#### 1pm LUNCH AND VISUAL PRESENTATIONS LEVEL 12
## SESSION 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Student transition</td>
<td>11:09</td>
<td>How a writing club assists in the retention of first year students: The Pink Palace experiment</td>
<td>Terry Hallahan, College of Business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Blended learning</td>
<td>11:06</td>
<td>The Dermal Therapies Blended Learning Model: A case study examining the challenges of delivering practical components to online students</td>
<td>Peter Hartley, College of Health &amp; Biomedicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Student success and retention</td>
<td>10:49</td>
<td>Internationalisation of Australian law curriculum: What does this mean and what does it involve?</td>
<td>Deborah Tyler, Centre for Collaborative Learning &amp; Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D</td>
<td>Work integrated learning</td>
<td>11:10</td>
<td>Student experiences from an international osteopathic clinical placement – a qualitative study</td>
<td>Roger Funk, College of Health &amp; Biomedicine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E</td>
<td>STEM roundtable</td>
<td>11:24</td>
<td>Discussion includes mathematics and student progression, problem-based learning and the impact of coded assessment</td>
<td>Pat Drake, STEM Education Strategic Initiatives</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## SESSION 5

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A</td>
<td>Student transition</td>
<td>11:09</td>
<td>Belonging and identity – an investigation of first year engagement and transition into the Victoria University sport and exercise science programs</td>
<td>Gayanee Samarakicrema, Centre of Collaborative Learning &amp; Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B</td>
<td>Blended learning</td>
<td>11:06</td>
<td>Creating coherence in unit content and assessment: using blended learning in a postgraduate unit shared by two disciplinary cohorts</td>
<td>Michael Sturmy, Centre of Collaborative Learning &amp; Teaching</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C</td>
<td>Student success and retention roundtable</td>
<td>11:24</td>
<td>Discussion including the first year experience, academic language and learning, student engagement and high engagement teaching strategies</td>
<td>Fiona Henderson, Academic Support &amp; Development</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### SESSION 5 CONTINUED

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| D Work integrated learning    | 11:10| Enabling blended learning through innovative course design in partnership with industry | Su Robertson  
College of Law & Justice | Gail Bray and Nicola Stevens  
Victoria Polytechnic |
| E Student engagement          | 10:49| Use of various audience response systems in first year anatomy and physiology enhances learning in large group lecture environments | Brendan McCarthy  
College of Law & Justice | Puspha Sinnayah, Jeremy Drake, Matthew Cooke with Christine MacArdy and Duncan McLeod  
College of Health & Biomedicine |

**3.30PM  CONCURRENT PRESENTATIONS – SESSION 6**

### SESSION 6

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Stream</th>
<th>Room</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Chair</th>
<th>Presenters</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| A Student transition          | 11:09| What does prerequisite free really mean in the case of first year units?   | Deborah Tyler  
Centre for Collaborative Learning & Teaching | John Weldon  
College of Arts |
| B Blended learning            | 11:06| Improving the progression and retention of first year students in health-related courses, using flipped and poly-synchronous blended learning strategies | Alasdair McAndrew  
College of Engineering & Science | Puspha Sinnayah, Xiao Su, Melanie Sullivan, Jeremy Drake and Kathy Tangalakis with Nikki Graham and Tina Prizzi  
College of Health & Biomedicine |
| C Student success & retention | 10:49| Building global citizens through student peer mentoring – three College approaches | Susan Young  
Office of the Dean of Students | Jackie Hammill¹, Alan McWilliams², Gavin Lees³, Kathy Tangalakis³ and Cagil Ozansoy⁴  
¹Office of the Dean of Students  
²College of Business  
³College of Health & Biomedicine  
⁴College of Engineering & Science |
| D Work integrated learning    | 11:10| From application to graduation – studying tertiary music in a community/industry setting at Kindred | Roger Funk  
College of Health & Biomedicine | Greg Aronson, Robert Bell, Adam Hutterer and Stephen Rando  
College of Arts |
| E Student engagement          | 11:24| Constructive alignment of BHO1171 – actions, observations and evidence | Andrew Smallridge  
College of Engineering & Science | Maxwell Winchester, Tao Bak and Rosa Rios  
College of Business |

**4.15PM  CLOSE**
## ABSTRACTS LIST

### SESSION 1 | 10.15am

**Stream A**
Developing ‘philosophies of practice’ with first year Sport Coaching students as professional and academic induction. Juanita Custance and Daryl Marchant

**Stream B**
Academics blending and flipping: Learning to teach together, shifting the locus of control and making different spaces to co-construct knowledge. Mark Selkirk, Kim Kearny, Vicky Plows and Dung Tran

**Stream C**
Bridging two worlds: Using diverse students’ cultural lifeworlds as assets for disciplinary learning. Angela Daddow and Brita Schneider with Shaun Conlan and Lobsang Drimedtsang

**Stream D**
Roundtable: Information management in an ageing age. Chair: Ralph Kiel

**Stream E**
Student engagement with industry through personal branding in social media. Paul Hawking

### SESSION 2 | 11.30am

**Stream A**
Fellow travellers in a strange land: diversity, collaboration, and community in first year foundations. Julie Fletcher and Pauline O’Maley

**Stream B**
Blended learning and the BEd (P-12): the challenges and triumphs of using digital technologies in large courses. Peter Thomas, Helen Widdop Quinton, Amanda Muscat, Marcelle Cacciatolo and Susan Ferguson with Emma Garner, Michael Marmion, Dustin Feebles, Alex Sorensen and Niela White

**Stream C**
Mentoring our PhD students as budding academics through the Learning Through Teaching program (LTTP) @VU. A response to a messy problem. Teresa De Fazio and various panel members from VU as mentors and mentees

**Stream D**
Evaluation of the effect on graded clinical competencies when clinical placements are partially replaced by simulated learning (SL) videos for year three student osteopaths: a pilot study. Kylie Fitzgerald with Reid Mountney and Ema Stancic

**Stream E**
Goals – using gamification to engage students in first year engineering physics. Thinh Nguyen with John Psaila

### SESSION 3 | 12.15pm

**Stream A**
Roundtable: Transition strategy. Chair: Susan Young

**Stream B**
Engaging students and hearing their voice in the online environment. Natasha Dywer and Maree Keating

**Stream C**
A school for scandal? Using society’s misdeeds to teach Academic Integrity to first Year Business students. Fiona Henderson and Alan McWilliams

**Stream D**
Undergraduate nursing student perceptions of a supervised self-directed learning laboratory for enhancing workplace preparedness. Debra Kerr, Jennifer Ratcliff, Lisa Tabb and Ruby Walter

**Stream E**
‘You can’t learn how to swim without getting wet’: A case study from VU-Timor Leste study tour. Siew Fang Law with Joey Rebakis

### SESSION 4 | 2pm

**Stream A**
How a writing club assists in the retention of first year students: The Pink Palace experiment. Gabriella Pietto, Paul Russell and Narelle Benedict

**Stream B**
The dermal therapies blended learning model: the challenges of delivering practical components to online students. Frank Perri and Sarah Bartfield with Chrys Antoniou, Renee Francis and Jennifer Hookham

**Stream C**
Internationalisation of Australian law curriculum: What does this mean and what does it involve? David Parker and Dharshini Balasingam

**Stream D**
Student experiences from an international osteopathic clinical placement – a qualitative study. Kylie Fitzgerald, Tracy Denning and Denise Conolly with Katherine Schafftner

**Stream E**
Roundtable: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM). Chair: Pat Drake

### SESSION 5 | 2.45pm

**Stream A**
Belonging and identity – an investigation of first year engagement and transition into the Victoria University sport and exercise science programs. Andrew Dawson, Juanita Custance and Kadeisha Walmsley

**Stream B**
Creating coherence in unit content and assessment: using blended learning in a postgraduate unit shared between two disciplinary cohorts. Maree Keating and Fabio Serpelli

**Stream C**
Roundtable: Student success & retention. Chair: Fiona Henderson

**Stream D**
Enabling blended learning through innovative course design in partnership with industry. Gail Bray and Nicola Stevens

**Stream E**
Use of various audience response systems in first year anatomy and physiology enhances learning in large group lecture environments. Matthew Cooke, Jeremy Drake and Puspha Sinnayah with Christine MacArdy and Duncan McLeod

### SESSION 6 | 3.30pm

**Stream A**
What does pre-requisite free really mean in the case of first year units? John Weldon

**Stream B**
Improving the progression and retention of first year students in health-related courses, using flipped and polychrono-synchronous blended learning strategies. Puspha Sinnayah, Xiao Su, Melanie Sullivan, Jeremy Drake and Kathy Tangalakis with Nikki Graham and Tina Prizzi

**Stream C**
Building global citizens through student peer mentoring – three College approaches. Jackie Hammill, Alan McWilliams, Gavin Lees, Kathy Tangalakis and Cagil Ozansoy

**Stream D**
From application to graduation – studying tertiary music in a community/industry setting at Kindred. Greg Aronson, Robert Bell, Adam Hutterer and Stephen Rando

**Stream E**
Constructive alignment of BHR1171 – actions, observations and evidence. Maxwell Winchester, Tao Bak and Rosa Rios
An examination of how lecturers promote and determine levels of student engagement within the lecture setting in the paramedic discipline across Victoria. Sarah Gravatt

Examination of undergraduate paramedic clinical placement within a traditional and novel setting. Gavin Smith

Formative learning to support skill development in the critical evaluation of literature: A course wide approach. Leah Dowling and Helen McCarthy

Improving student engagement – international students. Anna Sekhar

Language and writing skills interactive video tutorials. Michael Mifsud

Pharmacophobia: using digital games to reduce fear and enhance student engagement and learning in undergraduate level pharmacology units across health-related courses. Shaunagh Darroch, Cate Kamphuis, Kathy Tangalakis and Deb Kerr

Staff perceptions of a blended learning initiative in the college of business: A case study. Angela Utomo, Lily Wong and Gayani Samarawickrema

Unit-specific mentor supporting blended learning and individual student outcomes. Selvi Kannan and Ancy Ramasamy

**VISUAL PRESENTATIONS LIST**

Listed by alphabetical order of abstract title

- An examination of how lecturers promote and determine levels of student engagement within the lecture setting in the paramedic discipline across Victoria. Sarah Gravatt
- Examination of undergraduate paramedic clinical placement within a traditional and novel setting. Gavin Smith
- Formative learning to support skill development in the critical evaluation of literature: A course wide approach. Leah Dowling and Helen McCarthy
- Improving student engagement – international students. Anna Sekhar
- Language and writing skills interactive video tutorials. Michael Mifsud
- Pharmacophobia: using digital games to reduce fear and enhance student engagement and learning in undergraduate level pharmacology units across health-related courses. Shaunagh Darroch, Cate Kamphuis, Kathy Tangalakis and Deb Kerr
- Staff perceptions of a blended learning initiative in the college of business: A case study. Angela Utomo, Lily Wong and Gayani Samarawickrema
- Unit-specific mentor supporting blended learning and individual student outcomes. Selvi Kannan and Ancy Ramasamy

**SUMMARY**

**ORAL PRESENTATIONS**

**LEVELS 10 AND 11**

- **Stream A**
  - Student transition
- **Stream B**
  - Blended learning
- **Stream C**
  - Student success and retention
- **Stream D**
  - Work integrated learning
- **Stream E**
  - Student engagement

**ROUNDTABLES**

**ROOM 11:24**

- 10.15am Information management in an e-learning age
- 12.15pm Transition strategy
- 2pm Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM)
- 2.45pm Student success and retention

**VISUAL PRESENTATIONS**

**LEVEL 12**

- 8.45am Registration
- 11am Morning tea
- 1pm Lunch
ABSTRACTS

SESSION 1 | 10.15am

Stream A
Developing ‘philosophies of practice’ with first year sport coaching students as professional and academic induction. Juanita Custawnc1 and Daryl Marchant2
1ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT, 2COLLEGE OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCE

We discuss the impact of an early assessment task that is part of a semester-long, first-year academic development program, collaboratively designed by lecturers from Academic Support & Development and the Bachelor of Sport Coaching. The program has developed over a three-year partnership. The task, a coaching philosophy, offers a multidimensional approach to assessment for learning. Our approach makes the curriculum the explicit medium for developing employability and academic expertise, alongside being the vehicle for ‘content delivery’.

In this presentation, we share how our collaboration has opened new ways for us to understand and support our students’ engagement and transition to VU. Developing coaching philosophies from the beginning of the course has been invaluable for both students and ourselves as educators. The philosophy is used to gain greater understandings of our students’ experiences, motivations, and learning needs; while developing critical and reflective thinking, the capacity to blend macro and micro practice concepts; and begins the process of developing a professional identity.

From our perspective, the philosophy assists us in better understanding students as individuals and learners. The whole-group and individual feedback processes we employ increase our confidence that students are equipped with the necessary disciplinary writing skills to undertake writing tasks throughout the degree. Student evaluations indicate that developing the philosophy is a highly valued assessment task. Although initially designed to provide authentic writing samples to assess early literacy skills, students reported they were using their philosophies in CVs and job applications. This information inspired us to create digital portfolios for students to document the development of their coaching philosophies across their degree, with the expectation that on graduation the philosophies will form part of a professional portfolio.

Stream B
Academics blending and flipping: Learning to teach together, shifting the locus of control and making different spaces to co-construct knowledge. Mark Selkri, Kim Keamy, Vicky Flows and Dung Tran
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

A team of 15 academic staff with links to the College of Education (CoE) worked closely with an educational designer in late 2015 and semester one, 2016. We reconceptualised and designed both ‘flipped’ and blended learning approaches in a compulsory unit for all masters by coursework students in the CoE, AEDS5001 Education Research Design and Methods. We also wanted to develop flexible, accessible learning materials and explore multi-modal ways of communicating through VU Collaborate (VUC). Our aim was to increase students’ agency in their learning and the learning of their peers, while also building staff capacity in teaching in the online environment through a collegial process. The reversioned unit went ‘live’ in semester one, 2016 for 190 students, with a blend of online (learning modules, discussions, chats) and less-frequent small group face-to-face (F2F) sessions. The re-versioned unit did not eventuate without a number of challenges along the way, such as competing demands of time for the group to meet, discuss and plan; fluid staffing in the early stages; the need to compromise and be creative as we re-built every aspect of the unit together.

A significant implication to emerge from this project has involved us (the staff working in the unit collectively confronting our respective ideas about teaching as well as educational research. By interrogating the pedagogical possibilities and affordances of the VUC space to consider different ways of co-constructing knowledge, there was a two-way shift. As well as the locus of control shifting to the students, our locus of control as individual teachers shifted to a more collaborative process with our colleagues and the ways in which we work with students. The particular messy problem we will focus on in this presentation relates to the tensions, trajectories and transformations that emerged for us as academics as we moved to uncertain places and spaces while working together to enhance student experiences and outcomes in a changing university context.

Stream C
Bridging two worlds: Using diverse students’ cultural lifeworlds as assets for disciplinary learning. Angela Daddow1 and Britta Schneider2 with Alba Barbargallo and Shaun Conlan
1COLLEGE OF ARTS, 2ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

As diverse students enter Australian universities through policies of widening participation and global markets, universities struggle to keep pace with the cultural, linguistic, educational diversity of newer students and the complex realities of their lifeworlds. To date, university curricula still privilege elite literacy practices, which can create learning barriers for diverse students, silence their epistemologies and perpetuate inequities and deficit discourses among key university stakeholders.

Drawing on sociocultural theories of learning and research outside and/or alongside tertiary education [Academic Literacies, Funds of Knowledge] this presentation presents practitioner action research at VU that aimed to examine curricular and pedagogic alternatives that better supported the education of diverse students, resisted deficit constructions and valorised their cultural assets.

This collaborative curriculum was designed and enacted over two cycles in two subjects in the Bachelor of Social Work in 2013 by social work and academic language and learning lecturers. The action research data included student questionnaires and focus group interviews, educator interviews, course documents and a field journal to enable multiple voices from key stakeholders.

The findings affirmed the potentials and constraints of such pedagogic practices in offering socially just and effective ways to support diverse students in their tertiary education. These findings will be presented by the practitioner researchers and two students who have experienced the pedagogies.

Victoria University
The College of Business has conducted a survey of the first year student experience for students in the Bachelor of Business degree at VU. This survey has been conducted in both semesters since 2013. Until semester one, 2016, the survey has been paper-based and students have been asked to fill out the survey in class. The use of paper-based surveys has some logistical challenges associated with it. Class time is encroached upon; staff time is required to administer the paper-based survey to classes on two campuses, control of the security of the completed surveys is required to satisfy research ethics standards of conduct and data entry is ‘manual’, time consuming and laborious. To overcome these issues the decision was made to conduct the survey online to offer greater efficiency in the administration of the survey and to enhance the opportunity for student voice by communicating directly in a way ‘digital natives’ will find more accessible. However, the possibility of low response rates was seen as a potentially unacceptably high price to pay for convenience. This discussion reports on the techniques used to enhance response rates to the online version of the first year student experience survey and compares response rates with those of the paper-based version.

Stream E
Student engagement with industry through personal branding in social media.
Paul Hawking
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

For students to enhance their prospects for employment and promotion in today’s workplaces they need to differentiate themselves. Academic qualifications and work experience are traditional methods that have been used for this differentiation. Increasingly students are using social media as an additional means of differentiation. The impact of personal branding on social media can be significant and far-reaching. Postgraduate students in the College of Business enrolled Master of Business (Enterprise Resource Planning Systems) and the Master of Business Analytics are encouraged to consider the role of social media personal branding in enhancing their profile. They are introduced to personal branding and important social media avenues where their profile can be enhanced. In a number of units, as part of their assessment, they are required to demonstrate their knowledge through different social media. This has resulted in increased social media profile; enhanced employability of students; greater interaction with industry; increased publicity about VU and the education offered; and increased course enrolments. These initiatives can be a foundation for similar educational activities throughout the university.
offered to students for the first time to just over 500 students. All students now complete a core year of College of Education units which has created synergies both in the experiences of the students completing the units and between the various lecturing teams: new units in ICT, STEM and Human Development have been written to complement foundation units in Education: Mathematics, Literacy, Health, Humanities and Indigenous perspectives. We saw this as an opportunity to implement a well-considered Blended Learning approach, enhance the student experience and build a community of practice.

This presentation seeks to give a snap shot of our progress. It will consider the approaches each unit has taken in the use of VU Collaborate including the different ways we communicate with students, the techniques we used in presenting content and the changed forms of assessment. We will look at the way we have blended the on-line world with face to face teaching. It will pick up the issue of positive student engagement, vital in a large course, as well as the support structures we have from the wider university including the library and Academic Support and Development. Through the use of vignettes from lecturers and students, we will illuminate good practice as well as the messy problems that can arise from engaging in this exciting work, exploring the experiences from both student and teaching staff perspectives.

Stream C
Mentoring our PhD students as budding academics through the Learning Through Teaching program (LTTP) @VU: A response to a messy problem.

Teresea De Fazio1 and various panel members from VU as mentors and mentees

1ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT
Panel Members: Fiona Henderson1, Miguel Gi2, Silke Harmes3, Aaron Peterson4, Luca Oppici4, Alessandro Garofolini4, Gayani Samarawickerna5, Nick Owen6, Vasimal Manikkam7

1ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT,
2STUDENT TRANSITION AND RETENTION,
3COLLEGE OF BUSINESS,
4COLLEGE OF SPORTS AND EXERCISE SCIENCE,
5COT,
6COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE,
7COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE

Some PhD students embark on their studies with a view to entering the world of academia itself and take up sessional work to facilitate this career objective. However, they often face considerable challenges in their dual roles of PhD student and VU novice academic: Levels of support for the student vary considerably and are highly dependent on the capacity of the circle of experienced academic staff around these novice academics. This presentation reports on the innovative Learning through teaching program (LTTP) which was part of an Office for Learning and Teaching Extension project at VU. The LTTP model brings together PhD students as mentees, and teaching staff across the university as mentors in a formal ten week mentoring program. The program includes workshops and individual mentoring sessions when participants come together to explore themes of assessment and feedback. The aim is that this inquiry provides a lens for exploring participant research experiences, as well as experiences of teaching in academia. This presentation provides an opportunity to explore notions of PhD student transition and support, mentoring experiences and academic literacies through the panel discussion. The presentation aims to engage the VU community in a consideration of issues presented to further inform the LTTP model.

Stream D
Evaluation of the effect on graded clinical competencies when clinical placements are partially replaced by simulated learning (SL) videos for year three student osteopaths: a pilot study.

Kylie Fitzgerald with Reid Mountney and Erna Stancic

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE

Osteopathy students at VU currently undertake a traditional clinical education model by completing the specified hours and undertaking a minimum number of patient consultations. Simulated learning activities are used to supplement and/or partially replace traditional clinical placements. The aim of this study was to quantitatively evaluate the effect on graded clinical competencies of three simulation learning videos replacing three clinical placements for year three osteopathy students in first semester 2016. Participants were required to watch the simulated patient videos and answer a series of questions including their clinical reasoning, examination planning and diagnoses. This enabled deliberate practice in a range of clinical scenarios. Participants in the experimental group received detailed, personalised feedback and discussion on each scenario. Numerical scores for clinical performance in exams [0-4] for the control and experimental group were collected. The means of groups were compared using Wilcoxon-Mann-Whitney test.

Both groups achieved equal scores in all categories of clinical competency, including hands on skills in the end of semester clinical examinations. This finding offers support for replacing a portion of traditional clinical placement with structured simulated learning activities at the third year level in the osteopathy course at VU. This finding has important implications for offering sustainable clinical training resources that can support and develop a student’s clinical skills without relying solely on traditional clinical placements.

Stream E
Goals – using gamification to engage students in first year engineering physics.

Thinh Nguyen with John Pailla

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Today’s students have grown up in the age of gaming and have not known a world without video games. Research has shown that the average young adult spends up to 10,000 hours playing games by the age of 21. Today’s students have come to expect sustained stimulation and short-term rewards offered by games. This vastly differs from the realities of the university experience which is dominated by long hours of passive learning. Games incorporate elements and mechanisms that successfully engage and motivate the player and to change player behaviour.

The application of game elements and mechanics to non-game activities is called gamification. Gamification has been successfully and extensively applied in business and the consumer markets for many decades as well as in K-12 education. However, it is only at the early stage of adoption in higher education. As the education sector seeks to find better ways to engage with their students, gamification learning presents a valuable opportunity for students to connect with their learning.

The application of gamification was introduced into an introductory physics unit in the engineering courses, and it’s potential
Embedding academic literacy—whose business is it really?
Elaine Speight-Burton and Gabriella Pretto
ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

Transition pedagogy aims to enact whole-institution approaches to enhance the student experience in first year university and beyond. For Academic Support and Development (ASD) lecturers, this increasingly entails close collaboration with discipline lecturers in relation to embedding academic literacy development within the university curricula.

As part of our interdisciplinary work in a transition diploma program, ASD, with lecturers in literacy and sociology devised an early written task as an assessment for student learning. As ASD lecturers, we also viewed the task as a professional development opportunity to discuss the ways in which academic literacy could be integrated into learning and assessments in an explicit way. Effective interdisciplinary approaches are often very rewarding, however, as we discovered, they can be tricky to pull off as academics come from a range of backgrounds and perspectives often shaped by their disciplinary socialisation.

Questions arose about the place of writing and the role of literacy development in learning, about ‘content’ and ‘language’ and about who is responsible for the design, marking, moderation and feedback of a ‘literacy’ task, and whether writing tasks such as these should be part of the assessment process at all.

We suggest that it is in the process of working through these messy problems that good practice emerges. As the process evolved, it became evident that there were very different perceptions about the purpose of the written task and the role of staff in teaching and assessing in areas ‘outside’ their traditional disciplinary field of knowledge. We found that rich, complex, ongoing discussions opened up about the place of writing in the curriculum and the broader role of assessment.

This roundtable will include discussion about how we navigated between our different viewpoints, values and epistemologies, and the implications of interdisciplinary work for transition pedagogy.

The role of close collaboration of schools and universities in the successful transition of students from non-traditional backgrounds to university
Jacinta Richards and Karen Charman
STUDENT TRANSITION AND RETENTION

Emergent literature supports the benefit of building a strong interface between schools and universities to both build student aspiration and preparation for higher education, and by doing so widen the participation of students from diverse backgrounds in university. Regarding the impact of transitions programs, it has been asserted that although all programs have a positive role to play, those that include close to authentic teaching and learning experiences, involve greater engagement of students and teachers and that run over extended time are the most effective.

In 2014 VU piloted the Early-University Pathways (EUP) program that involved an extended period of study at the university for Year 11 students from neighbouring low socio-economic status (LSES) schools in the west of Melbourne. Students undertook a ten-week, authentic learning experience one afternoon a week where they were enrolled in a particularly developed university teaching unit and underwent an extended on-campus learning program.

In 2015 the Year 12 Higher Education Studies EUP program was run for the first time where students undertook two units of study in mainstream first year courses over the full academic year. These units counted both for their Victorian Certificate of Education (VCE) and for advanced standing for two units of specified undergraduate degrees.

The program enabled alternative entry to the university based on meeting specific requirements in the program. Stakeholder data on students has been collected and evaluated. It has been found that it has successfully targeted a more diverse group of students and has succeeded in building university readiness.
ABSTRACTS

Stream B
Engaging students and hearing their voice in the online environment.
Natasha Dwyer and Maree Keating
COLLEGE OF ARTS

Sharing a suite of units across postgraduate digital media, communication and public relations courses, in 2016 the authors developed online curricula to support face-to-face interactions across four selected units of study. In the process, we identified a range of new ways to engage our diverse domestic and international student cohort, many of whom are experienced professionals, work full-time and/or have family obligations.

The level of student engagement, including interactions with the content, teacher and other colleagues is closely linked to learning outcomes. Such outcomes can be measured in relation to the quality of student assessment but it can also be seen in the extent of their adoption of unit content on their own terms. Student voice is central to this process, as it allows for students to actively participate in constructing knowledge, and the online environment offers a range of exciting opportunities for this.

Our presentation reports on strategies we used to encourage and develop student voice in the online environment. These strategies were designed to increase student participation in discussions (based on their real-world experiences as well as more theoretical concepts), provide constructive feedback on each others’ ideas and on the curriculum, and co-create assessment activities. Students’ varying digital literacy and confidence across genres of English language expression presented some complex pedagogical challenges in this process. Drawing on student texts which show shifts in uses of discussion boards, student interactions with each other and the lecturers as well as in the quality of student assessment and feedback, we offer some insights into successful (and not so successful) online engagement strategies. We discuss the ways in which interaction was ‘structured’ throughout the curriculum and how ‘incentives’ were used.

We also reflect on the particular demands on educators to model constructive language, and to develop new roles as ‘curators’ and ‘moderators’ in online learning environments.

Stream C
A school for scandal? Using society’s misdeeds to teach Academic Integrity to first year Business students.
Fiona Henderson1 and Alan McWilliams2
1ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT, 2COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Academic Integrity has clear philosophical foundations which can be projected beyond the classroom and into professional life. The same philosophical foundation is also linked to professional standards of ethical conduct required by such professions as accounting and law as well as financial advising and the banking industry. Recent scandals in the banking sector, insurance industry, building industry and financial advising, and the public outrage surrounding them, support the contention that ethical standards are important to societal expectations as well as workplace values.

Student awareness of Academic Integrity is variable. Participation in assessment, which is connected to real life aspects of their destination career, is one way to enable students to see the value of the activity. A first year introduction to management unit in the Bachelor of Business uses current examples of business scandals to illustrate theory in practice.

These examples then form the basis of an exploration of academic integrity as it relates to the first written assignment tasks these students are undertaking at a university level.

Stream D
Undergraduate nursing student perceptions of a supervised self-directed learning laboratory for enhancing workplace preparedness.
Debra Kerr, Jennifer Ratcliff, Lisa Tabb and Ruby Walter
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE

Maximising opportunities in the university setting to practice nursing skills prior to clinical placement has become increasingly important to ensure that students are adequately prepared, leading to achievement of core nursing competencies prior to graduation. Strategies to enhance performance of clinical skills have been introduced to complement nursing curricula, such as self-study laboratories. In late 2014, concerns were raised by industry partners about the preparedness of students for clinical placement. A self-directed learning laboratory (SDL Lab) was introduced in February 2015, furnished with equipment and access to clinical education staff seconded from a major industry partner, resembling a ‘real life’ clinical environment. This innovation aimed to assist the student to be ‘work safe’ and ‘work ready’ for professional practice in the clinical setting. Students were invited to self-nominate and practice skills taught in structured classes (lecture, theoretical and laboratory classes) in the SDL Lab.

Evaluation of the SDL Lab was informed by a qualitative descriptive method using semi-structured face-to-face interviews. The purpose of this study was to explore the experiences and viewpoints of the undergraduate nurse participants, with particular focus on the perceived benefits and limitations of the SDL Lab and impact on learning and preparedness for professional practice. Twelve participants, all final year students, were interviewed. Key findings included that students valued the opportunity for guided practice in the SDL Lab which strengthened their confidence and competence during workplace experiences. Secondly, the safe environment encouraged enquiry and bridged the theory-practice gap. Thirdly, the teaching space could be improved to enhance accessibility and realism with up-to-date and contemporaneous equipment, and general layout.

In response to student feedback, a new and larger clinical area was opened in February 2016 to improve this teaching and learning innovation.

Stream E
‘You can’t learn how to swim without getting wet’: A case study from VU-Timor Leste study tour.
Siew Fang Law with Joey Rebakis
COLLEGE OF ARTS

Teaching and learning beyond the classrooms and in ‘real’ learning sites, such as international study tours, can offer irreplaceably rich and transformative learning experience for students. However, a well-organised, academically embedded international study tours are critical not only to ensure good practice and prevent messy problems. At this presentation, we will talk about the use of ethnography research approach as pedagogy. We will share
how we prepare and guide our students to immerse in Timorese culture, yet critically reflect on their own upbringing, education and social positioning and the ways they ‘see’ and ‘interpret’ Timor Leste.

The presentation will be co-presented by staff members and a student.

**SESSION 4 | 2pm**

**Stream A**

How a writing club assists in the retention of first year students: The Pink Palace experiment.

Gabriella Pretto\(^1\), Paul Russell\(^2\) and Narelle Benedict\(^3\)

\(^1\)ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT, \(^2\)COLLEGE OF EDUCATION, \(^3\)TRANSNATIONAL EDUCATION

Many students attracted to youth work come with passion and maturity, poor academic writing skills and low self-esteem. Often they have had unsuccessful school experiences or a disrupted education. Generally, youth work students do not readily engage with university support services, they prefer the Pink Palace in the Youth Work area to be a one-stop shop. As literature suggests that student engagement and retention is linked to academic self-efficacy, it was decided to trial a writing club, Youth Work Writing Club (YWWC); a forum for individual students to build confidence, reduce assessment anxiety and participate in peer collaboration, within a discipline specific learning and discourse community. Its key commitment is as a first year retention tool to assist in the transition to university life.

The YWWC welcomes students with varying levels of ability and meets weekly to give students an opportunity to give and receive feedback on their writing as well as provide support and motivation. It is facilitated by three mentors, being two lecturers and a student, as part of her third year research project. It is a Participatory Action Research project drawing on interviews, observation and survey data.

At VU, writing groups like this usually support HDR candidates, not undergraduates. The YWWC writing model is embedded within a discipline and does not follow traditional approaches and methods. It has an evolving format, student-directed, and does not fit easily into existing university paradigms for writing groups or academic support. The number of students attending the writing club is increasing, and early indications are it is having a significant impact. Although primarily targeted at the first year Bachelor of Youth Work, it is attracting students from the second and third year of the program. Might it be a model that other disciplines might use to enhance student engagement and retention.

**Stream B**

The dermal therapies blended learning model: the challenges of delivering practical components to online students.

Frank Perri and Sarah Bartfeld with Chrys Antoniou, Renee Francis and Jennifer Hookham

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE

The Bachelor of Health Science (Dermal Therapies) has had continued growth over the past ten years. While it is a niche market, the discipline has successfully sought to expand its market by offering its course in a blended learning model and targeting students from around the country. Dermal Therapies now has a growing cohort of online students in addition to its locally enrolled students. While teaching distance learners has its own challenges, the course has the added challenge of having a large practical component to deliver as it covers many treatments and modalities for the skin. The discipline has had to face the challenges of managing two cohorts of students covering both theory and practical classes, while trying to give both cohorts as equal an experience as possible. To address these challenges, the discipline has had to evolve to utilise technology efficiently, while operating within the constraints of a small team with a rapidly expanding student cohort.

Although SET and SEU and other official data are available to compare online and local students, these forms are not always returned. This qualitative study gauged more in depth information on the experiences between distance and on campus learners. This study involves current dermal students, who as part of their own studies are required to undertake a research project. The findings will be incorporated in to the next version of the course. The presentation will hopefully allow other disciplines to consider what has worked for dermal for possible implementation in their own courses, especially those courses that have practical components.

**Stream C**

Internationalisation of Australian law curriculum: What does this mean and what does it involve?

David Parker\(^1\), Dharshini Balasingam\(^2\) and Brendan McCarthy\(^3\)

\(^1\)COLLEGE OF LAW AND JUSTICE, \(^2\)SUNWAY COLLEGE, MALAYSIA, \(^3\)VU COLLEGE

Australian law curriculum, and indeed the teaching of that curriculum, has followed a mono cultural approach in both the content of course material and the mode in which that curriculum is designed, presented and assessed. A re-examination of our curriculum to incorporate and compare underlying cultural values, assumptions and teaching methodology might enhance better graduate attributes, for both our offshore students and local students who study the same law courses.

The challenge is to enable students to be more sensitive and better equipped in potentially embracing and operating in other cultures and legal systems. Similarly, can we contextualise our curriculum to better engage students when the same unit is offered in different countries to create a better learning experience and to prepare them for an increasingly globalised world? A demonstration of some teaching materials will demonstrate this.

In this presentation, the three presenters share their experiences in the internationalisation of two law units within VU. The presentation explores what ‘internationalisation’ might involve, the challenges, values and the process as the team work towards contextualising the two law units.

The presentation proposes that while the process could be ‘messy’, the value proposition for better teaching and learning for the teachers as well as students could be tremendous.
Stream D

Student experiences from an international osteopathic clinical placement – a qualitative study.

Kylie Fitzgerald, Tracy Denning and Denise Connell with Katherine Schaffner

COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE

The primary aim of this study was to explore student’s expectations and learning experiences of an international osteopathic clinical placement. Final year osteopathic students at VU undertook their international clinical placement at the British School of Osteopathy (BSO), London. Students undertook four weeks of supervised patient consultations at the BSO Osteopathic Clinic. Participants completed five reflective journals entries directed on the Subjective, Objective, Assessment and Planning (SOAP) process for improvement. The first entry was made before the placement commenced to capture students’ expectations, and then weekly entries were made throughout the four-week placement to gather their learning experiences. The reflective diaries were analysed by members of the research team using thematic analysis to identify key themes relating to expectations and learning experiences of the international clinical placement. Three main themes emerged from the participants initial expectations including mixed feelings (excited but nervous), seeing opportunity to grow (personal and professional) and having concerns (personal and professional). Five themes were identified from the participants learning experiences which included: expanding learning opportunities; advancing clinical readiness; facing challenges; personal growth and developing professional identity. The information obtained by this project was used to determine the future directions of the international placement program in osteopathic medicine.

Stream E

Roundtable: Science, Technology, Engineering and Math (STEM).

Chair: Pat Drake

Roundtable key questions:

- How can software enable us to integrate formative and summative assessment in mathematics without reinforcing the erroneous assumption that mathematics is right or wrong?

- Is it possible for students to engage with authentic problem solving and does this help in the development of basic mathematical skills and techniques?

- To what extent do students entering the university engage with mathematics confidently; how relevant is what they do to contemporary work practice?

Mathematics assessment online: the good, the bad, and the ugly.

Alasdair McAndrew

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

Mathematics is a core study in many disciplines, and so the problem of engaging a heterogeneous student cohort is a constant challenge. Taking as axiomatic that ‘assessment drives student learning’, one of the simplest and most effective ways of ensuring students stay ‘on track’, is some form of continuous assessment. For large classes, such as are common in many first year service units, one option is to use online assessment, managed by appropriate software, to take some of the burden of assessing from the teacher. Most software can deliver problems which are randomised in such a way that no two students receive exactly the same problem.

Students can take the test in their own time and software may be configured so that students can attempt the test multiple times, each time with slightly different randomised problems.

Such software has been trialled in the first year Engineering Mathematics units, which have hundreds of students. We have trialled both commercial and open-source software. This roundtable will discuss as well as the benefits, the problems of such software, including: the availability of appropriate questions in the ‘question bank’; the ease of being able to author questions in the system; ease of use of the software and student response; and the problem of only marking a final answer, and not the working which led to the answer.

This last point is particularly pertinent. Mathematics is often erroneously imagined to be right or wrong, and therefore easily amenable to computer marking. But in fact what we try to teach are methods, which are very hard to mark by software. In the discussion we consider how to address those problems, and how the students are reacting (positively!).

Problem-based learning in engineering mathematics.

Alasdair McAndrew and Anthony Doggett

COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

It has been shown that student learning gained from Problem-Based Learning (PBL) can exceed that gained from traditional lectures. We have introduced a PBL component into the second semester engineering mathematics subject at first year level with the aim of increasing student engagement and understanding. We have adopted an approach in which a well-described problem is stated, together with specific goals suited to the experience of the students. Each problem is tied to a syllabus topic.

Recent problems investigated by the students include: ‘Heat flow through double glazing’ and ‘Design of roller-coaster loops’. In this presentation we shall each describe the students approach to one of the PBL tasks recently used. The response has been encouraging, and students have demonstrated their interest in their hard work, their detailed reports, and in the breadth and depth of their questions. Some metastudies have indicated that whereas a PBL-dominated course may produce graduates with excellent design and team skills, students from more traditional courses gain a better and deeper understanding of the technical fundamentals such as mathematics.

‘Be a Sumbody’: Developing mathematical preparedness.

Pat Drake

STEM EDUCATION STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Students learning mathematics and maths-related skills at VU offer a challenge to all Colleges. The Be a Sumbody project in 2016 has addressed two of these challenges: student experience of mathematics as being difficult and unpleasant; and understanding how our success data in mathematics and statistics may connect with other aspects of students experience such as attrition, particularly in the first year. The expectations of teaching staff in tertiary education are that students should be able to engage with the mathematical demands of courses, and by and large, in the end, the students who complete successfully do just that. However data about student participation and success in maths-
ABSTRACTS

related units suggests that this is a significant struggle for many. Mathematics or statistics or data handling is a necessary underpinning discipline for many if not most areas of further study and consultations across Colleges in VU during 2016 have shown that there is concern about mathematics learning with various interventions in place to support students.

The session will include a short presentation that sets the situation at VU in the broader contexts of the National Innovation and Science Agenda (NISA). Work undertaken in one College as part of the Be a Sumbody project is mapping the mathematical expectations of industry with the mathematical demands of related courses. We need to ask ourselves just how much a student entering the university having completed Year 10 or equivalent (quite often more than five years ago) would engage with confidently, how relevant would Year 10 be to contemporary work practice, and what we can do about it.

SESSION 5  2.45pm
Stream A
Belonging and identity – an investigation of first year engagement and transition into the Victoria University sport and exercise science programs.
Andrew Dawson¹, Juanita Custance², and Kadeisha Walmsley¹
¹COLLEGE OF SPORT & EXERCISE SCIENCE
²ACADEMIC SUPPORT & DEVELOPMENT

Tertiary institutions such as VU compete with the complex demands on students’ lives such as work and the social freedoms that come with their transition into adulthood. Being offered a place in a university degree is the first step towards students becoming professional workers, and universities in Australia often struggle to keep students engaged with their professional development. First year students’ positive connection with their tertiary institution (belonging), their peers (belonging) and their career (identity) enable them to thrive through a complex and messy transition to becoming pre-service professionals. Without a clear sense of belonging and identity students in sportfocused programs are at serious risk of disengaging from their career aspirations and limiting their opportunities to find employment in the highly competitive sports job market. In response to these challenges the College of Sport and Exercise Science (CoSES) First Year Experience project team have instituted a number of innovations within orientation and the curriculum, the effectiveness of which we are exploring through action research.

This investigation examined the first year engagement experience of students enrolled in the VU sport and exercise science programs. In-depth interviews and an online survey were used to better understand how VU CoSES students experience their transition into first year. This presentation will discuss the key issues and challenges VU CoSES students faced when transitioning into sport-focused tertiary education at VU and provide recommendations for policy and practice.

Stream B
Creating coherence in unit content and assessment: using blended learning in a postgraduate unit shared by two disciplinary cohorts.
Maree Keating and Fabio Serpiello
COLLEGE OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCE

In this presentation we discuss a 2015 curriculum collaboration between the Master of Sport Science (Football Performance) and the Master of Communication. We report on how student feedback and evaluation improved the offering in 2016.

Our collaboration involved re-working the unit Organisational Communication, which was offered for the first time as a core unit to the new Master of Sport Science cohort in 2015. In order to create efficiencies between two small programs and to fit with the largely online Master of Sport Science structure, the unit was reconfigured from a traditional 12 week x 2-hour face-to-face format in which future Communication professionals learned to apply communication theory to cases of organisational practice. The unit was reworked for blended delivery, combining face to face seminars with themed online lectures, activities, readings and discussion board topics drawing on students’ lived experience. Whilst the Learning Objectives and communication themes covered in the original unit stayed the same, assessments, unit design, case studies for analysis, reading content, interactive activities and lecture structure were re-worked in various ways for the mixed cohort. The second iteration of the unit in 2016 incorporated student feedback and saw student evaluations of the unit and of teaching move up 1.5 points on average on the 1-5 scale.

In our presentation we discuss key challenges we encountered in developing and teaching this unit; particularly that of creating coherence in unit content and assessment across the two disciplines. Blended learning approaches which involved intense face to face seminars and polysynchronous student online activity opened up exciting possibilities for addressing this challenge, whilst requiring particular kinds of lecturer practices and pedagogies. Finally we discuss how different kinds of data and student feedback can help to refine blended learning practices and pedagogies.

Stream C
Roundtable: Student success and retention.
Chair: Fiona Henderson

How can professional learning programs work to support staff to embed inclusive and explicit teaching practices in higher education units?
Claire Brown¹ and Vida Voncina Vodeb²
¹VICTORIA INSTITUTE ²COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

This presentation reports findings from a recently completed Office of Learning and Teaching project that was designed to explore the professional teaching experience and learning needs of higher education educators. A customised version of an established American higher education professional learning program, Advancement via Individual Determination (AVID) for Higher Education was trialled at two Australian universities to explore whether it could be adapted for Australia to stimulate more engaging teaching, particularly in first year foundation units. The AVID collaborative, inquiry-based, immersion model of professional learning was very positively received. It stimulated more engaged teaching by providing regular professional learning combining both generic skills and discipline-specific material. However, findings on this project identified the need for universities to address both teaching and institutional factors to improve the quality of teaching. Project outcomes may be found in a report at <https://www.vu.edu.au/the-victoria-institute/publications>.

The key findings included that no single
professional learning activity can provide a
short cut to the years required to master the
complex art of becoming and remaining an
effective, accomplished teacher.

Secondly, programs need to be engaging
and model effective teaching practices,
be collaborative, scaffolded, practical,
sustained, supported and ongoing; one-
of sessions do not work. Thirdly, paying
sessional staff to attend professional learning
programs appears to provide a return on
investment that improves the quality and
engagement in higher education teaching,
but payment alone is not sufficient to
overcome institutional factors that restrict
which staff are able to attend and invest in
professional learning opportunities.

Finally, video exemplars of effective
higher education teaching should include
clear standards and encourage supportive
peer observation to raise the quality of
teaching.

Reaching out to students at ‘points of
crisis’: Maximising opportunities to reset
for academic success and more enjoyment
of university life.

Eileen Hanrahan1 and Danielle Borlovan2
1ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT,
2STUDENTS SUPPORTING STUDENT
LEARNING WITH TERRI MOISIDES AND ELENI
NEOCLEIOUS

VU transition initiatives lead in students
self-referring to Academic Support and
Development (ASD) and result in subsequent
academic success. However, second year
students who have been involved in post
progress hearings do not so readily engage
with the HEPP funded Post First Year Program
(PFYP). How can the messy problem of the
‘ubiquitous paradox of help-seeking’ be
addressed i.e. those who are most in need
being least likely to self-refer?

All 400+ students post progress meetings
were invited by ASD to attend the program
via texts and SMS. The second year
intervention workshops highlighted student
wellbeing as well as skills for academic
success. It included an O-week workshop
which included incorporation of stress and
self-management skills, and career vision
sessions. This workshop involving career
vision and counselling sessions which was
subsequently followed up by a traditional
suite of ASD learning activities.

The small cohort who self-referred have
done very well, one even transforming into a
HD student. All who attended more than one
session passed semester one units.

Key to further success of this project is
reaching the wider cohort. How could this
be achieved? We note the current direct
referrals from college meetings where a
student engagement (not punitive) model was
applied result in high student engagement.
Such a positive relationship experience
reduced the gap between lecturer and
student and increases motivation to take up
the recommended ASD services.

Another possible strategy to reach
more students would be a scheduled ASD
meeting for all students in the cohort. North
American models of formal probation
processes of compulsory attendance of
ASD unit and a mandatory study load
reduction result are also successful. And
currently, the PFYP is trialling an embedded
in a second year subject to reduce second
year failures.

Engaging with place: Activating student
engagement with community in the first
year of the Bachelor of Education (Early
Childhood/Primary).

Catherine Hamm, Kelly Boucher and Jeanne
Marie Iorio with Hayley Allen and Jessica
Fichera
COLLEGE OF EDUCATION

In our early childhood/primary course, we
witness how students want to privilege
Western knowledge, consuming simple ideas
and desiring quick answers. Students are
positioned as commodities making universities
sites for consuming content, and less about
engaging with ideas, working towards social
justice and change. This structure frames how
students engage within the university context
and recasts the academic as the service
provider. The academic as service provider
positions the academic to become an expert
in ‘light entertainment’ rather than challenging
students to think and engage in the process
of coming ‘to understand themselves in the
world through the curriculum they study’
(Pinar, 2012, p. 44). We are beginning a
call to action, a disruption of our expected
role as service provider and the student
as consumer. This presentation is drawn
from a larger study Rethinking Structures
and Policies within the VU Early Childhood
Course. The course rethinking process is
being underpinned by three concepts:

foregrounding Aboriginal perspectives;
engaging with different ways of knowing,
being and doing; and positioning academics
and students as public intellectuals.

We focus on the revisions that have been
made in the first year of the program situated
within a relationality framework that pays
attention to the conceptual, pedagogical and
technical aspects of teaching and teacher
education. Firstly, we show how the first year
professional experience has been rethought
to foreground and (re)centre local, specific
Aboriginal knowledges. Secondly, we
highlight the conceptual underpinnings of the
units of study and the first year professional
experience and show how these concepts
relate to student engagement. Thirdly, we
show how the content and assessment of the
units of study have been built around and
been informed by the professional experience
placement.

Academic support and First Year
Champions: Cross-institutional approach
to improving student success and retention

Fiona Henderson1, Julie Fletcher2, Kathy
Tangalakis1, Peter Thomas4, Sandra
McKechnie3, Alan McWilliams6 and Gavin
Lees4
1ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT,
2COLLEGE OF ARTS, 3COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND
BIOMEDICINE, 4COLLEGE OF EDUCATION,
5COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE,
6COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

Academic Language and Learning (ALL)
as a learning activity often happens as an
extra, sitting outside a student’s main area
of study. Potentially this conflicts with the
institution-wide approaches, increasingly
seen as the key to improving retention
outcomes. Intentional curriculum design and
cross-institutional engagement with the first
year experience combined with strong senior
leadership support a transition pedagogy.
The work of ALL could assist the development
of strategies to craft a transition pedagogy in
collaboration with the disciplines. The authors
believe that knowledge gained from ALL
strategies makes the ALL lecturers a pivotal
group of academic specialists who provide
timely feedback and critical support for
curriculum development.

At VU, the First Year Experience project
has seen the establishment of academic roles
within Colleges of First Year Champions
(FYCs), discipline-based lecturing staff who

"ABSTRACTS"
take on the additional role of FYC, and work in conjunction with Academic Support and Development (ASD) and Transition and Retention staff to develop College specific projects to improve the first year experience within their Colleges. FYCs serve as a key nexus between whole of university approaches to student support, and the immediate student experience within the Colleges. ASD has the academic literacy and learning skills, educational knowledge and abilities to help the FYCs to communicate ‘best practice’ approaches relating to student retention and success with their discipline colleagues. The FYC/ASD relationship is based on an acceptance by the FYCs of the ASD lecturers as ‘internal consultants’ who are able to support and facilitate them with the efficient and effective implementation of the transition pedagogy.

The collaborative approach is grounded in a proactive, developmental and embedded model of academic support which sees scaffolding of the development of discipline related academic literacies as an integral component of higher education study. Early data has indicated that the FYC/ASD approach has marginally improved progression rates in targeted degrees, and a range of positive outcomes have been reported. These include a renewed and energised focus on first year teaching and a breaking down of organisational silos, facilitating a greater level of collaboration across academic, professional and service areas.

In addition the project has provided a partnership model for systematising a university wide approach to the first year experience.

**Stream D**  
Enabling blended learning through innovative course design in partnership with industry.  
Gail Bray¹ and Nicola Stevens²  
¹LEARNING DEVELOPMENT, ²BACK TO WORK PROGRAM, VICTORIA POLYTECHNIC

In response to significant reform changes that have affected the TAFE sector since 2012, digital disruption and globalisation, Victoria Polytechnic (VP) (the TAFE division of VU) has undertaken a complete redesign of all VET courses following a blended delivery model. To remain sustainable into the future, industry partnerships are essential with an increased focus on high quality modular training that lead to job outcomes for our students. In early 2016, VP was engaged to deliver the Back to Work Program for unemployed youth. The program is a partnership between VP, Infoxchange and Microsoft, its purpose is to prepare students for employment in the IT industry.

Through innovative course design and in consultation with industry, we developed the Certificate II and III in Information, digital media and technology into a blended model that utilises interactive rapid e-learning, LMS technology that provides flexible access, phone apps for improved communication, and class based learning for demonstrating and practising skills. In addition students are further supported through language, literacy and numeracy training.

On completion of the Certificate II qualification participants are offered traineeships with a Microsoft business partner, during their traineeship students complete the Certificate III qualification, employment opportunities become available to students who complete both qualifications and this is facilitated by Infoxchange, who have a pool of partners and job opportunities. Throughout the student journey valuable learner analytics are captured and form part of the review and continuous improvement cycle for all courses.

**Stream E**  
Use of various audience response systems in first year anatomy and physiology enhances learning in large group lecture environments.  
Matthew Cooke, Jeremy Drake and Puspha Sinnayah with Christine MacArdy and Duncan Mcleod  
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE

Audience response systems are a tool that can be used to connect and engage with students during a lecture, but notably, promote instant feedback to the student regarding their comprehension of the material being covered. Clicker technology using TurningPoint software/hardware and online audience response systems, such as Kahoot and Socrative, have been used in various first year anatomy and physiology units at VU. Kahoot and Socrative are online student response systems where teachers can develop quizzes, surveys and/or start web discussions. The main difference between the two online platforms involves the stronger gamification element in Kahoot. Anecdotal evidence indicates that students’ engagement with Kahoot is greater than using clicker technology, given the element of competition involved.

An evaluation survey was administered in some units to assess the use of clicker technology in large group lectures.

Survey questions comprised of closed questions with a 5-scale Likert scale (1 = strongly agree to 5 = strongly disagree) and one open question. Results from these surveys indicated that students found the use of interactive technology enjoyable (4.3/5) and provided motivation to participate actively in lectures (4.2/5). Furthermore, feedback from staff indicated that the use of these audience response systems helped them to realign their content delivery based on learners’ needs.

The real-time feedback from students (i.e. answers to questions in class) gives the lecturer a better insight into areas of difficulty or student misconceptions. The use of these tools in lectures engages students in an active learning environment and also increases student satisfaction.

**SESSION 6 | 3.30pm**  
**Stream A**  
What does pre-requisite free really mean in the case of first year units?  
John Weldon  
COLLEGE OF ARTS

By listing a first year unit as prerequisite free we suggest to students that no prior disciplinary knowledge is required of them. Yet, the academy tacitly assumes that students will bring to each unit a certain level of cultural and discipline specific literacy. This often leads to a disparity between what the academy expects of it students and what the students expect from the academy, in relation to such units. This disparity of expectations between the two parties can lead to frustration and failure on the part of the student, which translates into retention issues for the institution.

This presentation looks at the first-year VU subject Introduction to Media Writing. It identifies the tacit assumptions made by the academy in the case of that unit and then discusses how the rewriting and recasting of this unit as Copy: Targeting Audiences attempts to address these assumptions via curriculum reform.
ABSTRACTS

Stream B
Improving the progression and retention of first year students in health-related courses, using flipped and poly-synchronous blended learning strategies.

Puspa Sinnamonah, Xiao Su, Melanie Sullivan, Jeremy Drake and Kathy Tangalakis with Nikkii Graham and Tina Prizzi
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE

Bioscience is offered to first year students enrolled in various courses, across two Colleges at VU. There are two core units offered over two semesters, with the semester one unit being the prerequisite for the semester two unit. The enrolment number is approximately 1,400 with a fail rate of approximately 20% in semester one. Non-progression of students from semester one into semester two delays the completion of their course, typically by one year, and contributes to attrition rates.

The aims of this project are to develop a poly-synchronous burst mode unit, with combined technology and team-based guided-inquiry workshops, for students in health-related courses who fail to pass the first year, semester one core mainstream Bioscience unit, and to assess the effectiveness of the mixed-mode Bioscience unit, by measuring student engagement, learning outcomes, first year progression and retention rates.

A mixed mode of teaching methods will be used, including on-line H5P modules, combined with face-to-face guided inquiry based workshop/laboratory sessions. Through a flipped classroom model, students will be exposed to teaching material prior to attending face-to-face workshop/laboratory classes where they will review the content in an active learning mode, employing team-based guided-inquiry. The unit will be offered for the first time in the winter semester, July 2016, and if successful, will be used during semester one in Bioscience units offered by the College.

It is expected that these innovative blended learning strategies will enhance students’ learning experience and improve student engagement, learning outcomes, first year progression and retention rates.

Stream C
Building global citizens through student peer mentoring – three College approaches.

Jackie Hammill¹, Alan McWilliams², Gavin Lees³, Kathy Tangalakis⁴ and Cagil Ozansoy⁴
¹OFFICE OF THE DEAN OF STUDENTS, ²COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, ³COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE, ⁴COLLEGE OF ENGINEERING AND SCIENCE

The transition into higher education can be challenging and this is even more so when students are from lower socio-economic backgrounds, are first in family to attend university, speak English as an Additional Language, work part-time or are raising families. Many students who are new to VU face at least one of these challenges which can impact on their ability to successfully reach their academic goals or participate in overseas mobility initiatives. To assist students to successfully transition into higher education, the Colleges of Business, Engineering and Health and Biomedicine in collaboration with Academic Support & Development (ASD) piloted an initiative to assist commencing students feeling a sense of engagement in their first few weeks at VU. Each College implemented a different strategy but all involved senior students engaging with commencing students in their first semester.

The senior students whom themselves are a mix of local and international cultures assisted new students to understand the complexities of university systems and relationships. The goal was to improve retention and achievement of their educational goals. An equally important goal of the pilot is to provide senior students with an opportunity to make a difference in other students’ lives and in doing so increase their own awareness of different world cultures and develop their sensitivity to and respect for cultural differences. The interaction with a diverse group of new students plus the training and development provided by ASD lecturers aids in the senior students’ sense of self-efficacy and progression towards being reflective and responsible global citizens.

This workshop will explore the background to College initiatives, and highlight the impact such programs can have for the global outlook on commencing and senior students.

Stream D
From application to graduation – studying tertiary music in a community/industry setting at Kindred.

Greg Aronson, Robert Bell, Adam Hutterer and Stephen Rando
COLLEGE OF ARTS

VU’s Vocational Education and Higher Education tertiary music courses are located at Kindred Studios in Yarraville. The delivery of our courses in an arts industry and community setting like Kindred provides a unique set of opportunities for engagement, collaboration, innovations in teaching and learning, and a vibrant student experience. From the moment applicants are auditioned and interviewed, VU music staff embark on a process of ensuring that they are placed in best course fit for them, and that their journey towards achieving their goals is achieved by the time they graduate to place themselves in their career of choice. Our motto is ‘it’s not about where you start, it’s where you end up’, and through personalised selection and admission processes, creative curriculum, inclusive and supportive culture, smooth pathways between courses, and strong engagement with industry, students are prepared for success. In recent years, the music courses are attaining such a public profile that our students are being offered new work opportunities to perform, produce and teach music on an almost daily basis – and Kindred Studios provides the ideal space and place for them to learn, experiment, prepare, and ultimately perform as work-ready professionals.

Stream E
Constructive alignment of BHO1171 – actions, observations and evidence.

Maxwell Winchester, Tao Bak and Rosa Rios
COLLEGE OF BUSINESS

In 2013, the BHO1171 Introduction to Marketing Unit Co-ordinator began working with staff in the Academic Support and Development team to review VU’s core Marketing unit offered in the College of Business, with the aim of improving the student experience. This involved a range of changes including: an overhaul of the learning outcomes to encourage more critical thinking rather than knowledge regurgitation, major changes to all assessments, and
altering the teaching format from a two hour lecture and one hour tutorial model to three hour seminar. In addition, academic skills opportunities were integrated into the unit, to cater more effectively for the needs of the increasingly diverse student cohort.

This presentation involves a summative evaluation of the changes made to the unit over the past three years to explore the effects of the changes. Results suggest that while there was a notable increase in student evaluation of the unit in 2013 when initial changes were made, SEU results have slowly returned down towards where they were before improvements were made to the unit; it is acknowledged that a change in the distribution SEUs may have contributed to this. However, there has been a marked improvement of student performance in the major case study and exam. These results are reassuring given the acceptance of increasingly lower ATAR students accepted into the Bachelor of Business course.

Perception of the relevance and usefulness of the academic skills initiatives, at the same time, has been consistently very high. Overall the evidence is suggests that the changes made have resulted in positive outcomes.

### VISUAL PRESENTATIONS

Listed by alphabetical order of abstract title.

### ABSTRACTS

An examination of how lecturers promote and determine levels of student engagement within the lecture setting in the paramedic discipline across Victoria. Sarah Gravatt

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE**

The lecture continues to be the main method of instruction utilised in higher education, and though it is useful in targeting a large number of students simultaneously, student feedback indicates it often lacks in its interactivity and ability to engage.

In early 2016, an investigation was conducted into how active learning is used within the lecture context across paramedic disciplines in Victoria via an online questionnaire. The aim of this study was to provide insight into how active learning is being utilised by academics, and what barriers academic staff believed prevented them from using these activities within their lectures. Furthermore, the study explored how lecturers gained feedback about levels of student engagement during the lecture itself and postlecture.

Participants agreed that active learning played an important role in the lecture, but only used active learning activities which required the least amount of effort and were the least ‘risky’. The biggest barriers identified were time constraints and class sizes. Feedback during the lecture was poorly discussed and the use of in-class activities as a feedback mechanism was not popular. All participants, however, utilised formalised university student surveys as a means of obtaining feedback post-lecture. This pilot study provides insight into what active learning activities are currently being used in the paramedic disciplines in the lecture, and identifies key barriers and challenges to using such activities.

Discussions on feedback practices also reveal that minimal real-time feedback is being received, suggesting lecturing practice remains poorly informed. With this information, we are better able to understand how we can best promote student engagement through the use of active learning activities and best inform teaching practice through seeking timely feedback.

### Examinations of undergraduate paramedic clinical placement within a traditional and novel setting.

**Gavin Smith**

**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE**

Clinical placement is an important facet of learning in health care, providing practical exposure for students and enabling the development of vital competencies in a controlled environment. Increasing demand and competition for traditional forms of clinical placement in paramedic undergraduate degree courses has prompted a need to evaluate these programs for the learning content that they deliver. This study compared traditional and novel clinical placement experiences of third-year paramedic science students at VU to report factors that may optimise future clinical placement programs. Using a descriptive methodology, clinical placement case exposure with comparative analysis of local and international student cohorts was conducted. Descriptive statistics reported patient and student experience factors. Specific case exposure, demonstration of skills and use of pharmacological agents are reported as proportions. Statistical analysis employed SPSS.

A total of 441 cases were analysed: 206 and 235 in the local and international study groups respectively. Mean caseload per paramedic student was not significantly different between study groups (1.2 cases (95%CI -2.8 to 0.4, p = 0.1)). The international group engaged in greater shift diversity, including the opportunity to experience night shifts. This study provides the first descriptive analysis of traditional and international clinical placement experience for paramedic students, identifying benefit in both programs. Future studies incorporating a mixed methods design will add important depth and understanding to clinical placement optimisation.

### Formative learning to support skill development in the critical evaluation of literature: A course wide approach.

**Leah Dowling¹ and Helen McCarthy²**

¹**COLLEGE OF SPORT AND EXERCISE SCIENCE,** ²**COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE**

The study and practice of evidence-based nutrition requires the core skills of critical evaluation and interpretation of scientific literature. Performance in such skills has been demonstrated to be lacking in summative assessment of final year (AQF 7) undergraduate nutrition students at VU. In keeping with the VU Agenda and Blueprint for Curriculum Reform 2012, embedding these core skills in each year of the curriculum in a course wide approach is imperative to support students as they transition through AQF levels. The aim of the study is to evaluate the effectiveness of scaffolded formative learning activities in supporting summative assessment and skill development in the critical evaluation and interpretation of scientific literature in undergraduate nutrition students.

Approximately 100 VU undergraduate nutrition students in each year level will complete a formative activity guiding them through the interpretation and critical evaluation of a research article with increasing complexity as they transition through AQF levels. This involves reading a research article prior to completing a worksheet in small groups, followed by class discussion and feedback. The first year activity compares a newspaper article reporting on a nutrition study with the...
Improving student engagement – international students.
Anna Sekhar
VU SYDNEY

Learning simply denotes one’s way of acquiring knowledge. This presentation expounds the poor learning outcomes from students who display poor student engagement. Delving deeper, student engagement or simply, in class participation takes various forms such as cognitive, intellectual, emotional and behavioural. These forms bear relevance to the behaviour of students in class, their persistence and effort, to name a few. Alongside these various forms of student engagement, this presentation aims to extrapolate the direct correlation between increased student engagement and active versus passive learning styles of students. Differences in culture and the accompanying shyness are a few other important factors that chiefly contribute to improving student engagement in international students in particular. When studying every organ of this concept, succinctly stated, technology combined with learning approach provides an effective solution. Technology embedded learning provides students that necessary convenience of listening to recorded lectures at their pace; alongside, it guarantees privacy of information especially when reading the feedback from their lecturer.

The presentation attempts to conclude by suggesting a need for greater use of technology for in class discussions to increase participation by students of non-English speaking backgrounds who are engulfed in cultural shyness. Whilst on the one hand, using technology in learning management systems assists in effective learning outside the class hours, on the other hand, using technology for in class discussions alongside formal lectures increases student engagement and their researching ability. Students become independent learners and appreciate a facilitator kind of approach to learning than a formal learning style. Students would also unconsciously know the art of backward design approach to learning.

Language and writing skills interactive video tutorials.
Michael Mifsud
ACADEMIC SUPPORT AND DEVELOPMENT

In a blended learning environment, content related to technical elements of grammar and writing lend themselves to flexible, multimedia delivery. A major benefit of this is that it frees up valuable face-to-face time for the application of language, to give it context and meaning. Teachers can determine the way these resources are positioned within their program or provide the tutorials to students for independent self-paced learning. Tutorial content is organised into very brief segments that can be accessed any time on any device via VU Collaborate. Users can control navigation, volume and captions, and complete short activities to consolidate their understanding of topics. These resources use animated written text, audio visual media and interactive activities to cater to a broad range of learning preferences in a seamless format. This pilot series of tutorials is a new resource that will be extended over time.

Pharmacophobia: using digital games to reduce fear and enhance student engagement in undergraduate level pharmacology units across health-related courses.
Shaunagh Darroch, Cate Kamphuis, Kathy Tangalakis and Deb Kerr
COLLEGE OF HEALTH AND BIOMEDICINE

Pharmacology is the study of the effect of drugs and chemicals on cell target sites (receptors) in body systems and encompasses a large body of knowledge, extending from basic principles to applied therapeutics. A good understanding of core concepts and their clinical application is integral to all health professions, including nursing and paramedicine. There are however inherent challenges for students in terms of the amount of highly theoretical material to be understood and the depth of prior bioscientific knowledge required. Lack of comprehension of pharmacological concepts may lead to unsuccessful progress and, more importantly, have a negative/dangerous impact on clinical practice.

The overall aim of this project is to design, develop, implement and evaluate a range of small interactive learning objects or ‘game-like tools’ available via the VU Collaborate Interactive Content Tool (<https://blendedlearning.vu.edu.au/HSP>). The implementation of the learning objects provides for formative assessments and timely feedback and encourages self-directed learning. Features include ‘drag and drop’, ‘fill in the gaps’, multiple choice questions and more advanced tools. These are initially used to gauge understanding of prerequisite anatomical and pathophysiological concepts and then core pharmacological concepts related to the learning outcomes.

The traditional lecture environment may not engage students nor help to develop higher order skills such as conceptual understanding, independent learning or problem-solving abilities. By creating a polysynchronous and blended learning environment which includes the use of these tools, students will be supported to engage with the core content of this complex but essential discipline area. This will hopefully assist with subsequent progression and retention.

Staff perceptions of a blended learning initiative in the college of business: A case study.
Angela Utomo1, Lily Wong1 and Gayani Samarawickrama2
1COLLEGE OF BUSINESS, 2CCLT

VU’s Blended Learning Strategy is targeted to improve the online and mobile digital student experience. The appointment of the Pro-Vice Chancellor (PVC) Digital Technologies and PVC Learning Innovation and Quality is an endorsement of this initiative. In line with this, a strategy to increase the presence
ABSTRACTS

of blended learning in the design and delivery of the College of Business (CoB) units was introduced in early 2015. Despite the presence of anecdotal evidence on the usefulness of systematic approaches of implementing blended learning within the CoB, the initiative's effectiveness is unknown. While information is available on VU Collaborate, and the introduction of VU Collaborate College templates, less is known about the educators' blended learning perceptions and practices.

The current research therefore aims to explore the adoption of blended learning practices within VU’s Business School, and evaluate the effectiveness of the College’s strategies of implementing blended learning i.e. what works and what does not. Without addressing educators’ underlying beliefs or perspectives of what blended learning means or looks like in practice, the significant investment in creating the VU Blend may not reach its optimum potential. Indeed a gap has been between the potential of available technologies and the uptake by educators. Using a mixed-methods evaluation approach, the proposed research will offer the opportunity to understand academic staff’ perceptions of blended learning and their current practices as well the value of the current College-based initiative. This will be imperative to improve educators’ adoption of blended learning strategies within the CoB and has the potential to inform the university-wide blended learning initiative.

Unit-specific mentor supporting blended learning and individual student outcomes.

Selvi Kannan and Ancy Ramasamy

COLEGE OF BUSINESS

Blended learning is an influential learning space that caters for the needs of an increasingly diverse student cohort. In essence, blended learning allows learners to select their best learning ways and enables educators to exercise this flexibility. The issue with diversity is that the most powerful space created with the best design and material support cannot be achieved without learners’ engagement and commitment. Students are heterogeneous in their learning needs and approaches, motivations, and expected outcomes. If they do not possess an informed understanding of how to adapt their learning to achieve their individual outcomes, then the most powerful feature of blended learning, i.e. its fluidity, becomes its weakest link.

To ensure that the learning activities within a blended environment (such as weekly summary instructions, online readings, virtual classrooms, discussions and assessments) are efficiently utilised and that students are engaging with them to achieve their set goals, a Unit Specific Mentor (USM) was trialled in two undergraduate units. The key idea was that the USM would help students reflect on their own learning and individual unit outcomes through collaborative interactions. However, only a handful of students expressed an interest in the program, and none of them engaged in consistent and meaningful connections with the USM. Students mainly perceived the USM as an additional resource who could provide support in their assessed works.

The outcomes of this project beg the following question: if mentoring is a tool that may improve students’ learning experience, how can educators better integrate mentoring arrangements within their pedagogical practices? In this project, the lack of student engagement with the mentor calls for more research on the constructive alignment of mentoring and blended learning strategies within different teaching and learning contexts. This work also highlights the need for a coherent mentoring praxis so as to bridge the gap between the mentor’s actual role and students’ expectations. It is only after addressing these challenges that mentors can aspire to support blended learning and individual student outcomes.