



Higher Education Research and Development Society of Australasia Inc

Queensland Branch

## HERDSA QLD Branch Mini-conference

*Shaping higher education with new ideas and emerging initiatives*

This free mini-conference is open to ALL staff - you don't need to be a current HERDSA member to participate

**Friday 6<sup>th</sup> November 9am-1pm, lunch following**

**Venue: James Cook University Townsville – Building 145.030 (ATSIP)**

### SCHEDULE

9am-9:10am	<b>Event welcome by Dr Rebecca Sealey (QLD Branch Chair)</b>
9:10am-10:40am	<b>Keynote speaker Dr Jessica Vanderlelie</b> Australian Learning and Teaching Fellow, Griffith University. <i>Are we losing our most valuable relationships? Thinking differently about engaging alumni.</i>
10:40-10:55am	Morning Tea
11am-11:30am	<b>HERDSA 2015 re-kindled, learning for life and work in a complex world</b> Peta Salter, Kelsey Halbert & Michael Singh <i>Local Global Learning – facilitating local and global citizenship in diverse learners through community based learning experiences.</i> Rebecca Sealey, Nadene George, Susan Gordon & Lisa Simmons <i>Preparing health profession students for work in inter-professional practice.</i>
11:30am-1pm	<b>HERDSA 2016 pre-presentations, shape of higher education</b> Jackie Eagers, Nicole Brown, Colleen Kaesehagen, Michelle Lasen & Rebecca Sealey <i>Agency and community: second-year students actively co-constructing understanding of requirements of a complex and authentic occupational therapy assessment task.</i> Sandra De Cat & Nick Emtage <i>Academic performance of undergraduate veterinary students: a retrospective cohort analysis.</i> Janice Lloyd et al <i>Nationally shared on-line curriculum resources for veterinary undergraduate learning and teaching in animal welfare and ethics.</i> Pam Megaw, Monika Zimanyi & Kathryn Meldrum <i>Catering for the masses.</i> Ryan Harris, Kate Domett, Helen Anscomb & Torres Woolley <i>Engaging first-year health science students studying anatomy with customized educational, instructional videos: a blended learning approach.</i> Debra Miles & Elise Howard <i>Going Places: Facilitating good practice in international social work student exchange in Australia and the Asia Pacific.</i>
1pm-1:30pm	Lunch and discussion

**REGISTER YOUR FREE ATTENDANCE:** Email [Rebecca.sealey@jcu.edu.au](mailto:Rebecca.sealey@jcu.edu.au) to register.

## 2016 PRE-PRESENTATIONS

**Jackie Eagers, Nicole Brown, Colleen Kaesehagen, Michelle Lasen & Rebecca Sealey**

### ***Agency and community: second-year students actively co-constructing understanding of requirements of a complex and authentic occupational therapy assessment task***

Background: Engaging students in pre-assessment activities designed to promote the social construction of knowledge of assessment requirements, criteria and standards has been shown to significantly improve student performance (Rust, Price, & O'Donovan, 2003). Initiative/Practice: The aim of this project was to actively engage second-year, occupational therapy students in workshops, wherein they collaborated with peers, to construct understanding of the complex and contextual requirements of an occupational profiling and intervention planning task. Methods: A series of three workshops was conducted in 2015. In the first workshop, students were presented with frequently asked questions from previous cohorts and, drawing on their collective experience of authentic assessment in the first-year program, worked in groups to construct handy hints. Tutors collated the hints and, in the second workshop, presented them to students, providing further opportunity for discussion and an ongoing support resource. The third workshop focused on emergent questions with final refinement of the handy hints. Students were invited to participate in a post-assessment online survey, comprising likert scale, yes/no and open-ended questions, to gain their feedback on the efficacy of the workshops. Evidence of effectiveness: Of the 61 students enrolled in the subject, 40 (65.5%) completed the survey. The majority of students agreed that: 1) the purpose of the workshops was clear; 2) they felt comfortable participating in the workshops; 3) the hints were useful for their learning; 4) the hints clarified assessment expectations; 5) they used the hints when completing the task; and 6) they felt more enabled to independently understand future assessment requirements. Students' qualitative responses communicated suggestions for future workshop development. The findings of this pilot project have led the team to adopt the 'social constructivist process model' of assessment (Rust, O'Donovan, & Price, 2005) more broadly across the first and second years of the occupational therapy curriculum.

**Sandra De Cat & Nick Emtage**

### ***Academic performance of undergraduate veterinary students: a retrospective cohort analysis***

The literature related to veterinary student attrition is limited, particularly in an Australasian context in recent years. With the increase in student numbers, the implementation of a demand-driven higher education system and the high costs associated with veterinary education, it is timely to evaluate factors affecting the success of veterinary students. Although caution should be used when applying broader data to veterinary education, it is well documented that student success is greatly influenced by student experience in first year. This study examined the relationship between a range of demographic and educational background factors of commencing veterinary students and their academic success within the course. The students included in the analysis were those who began a Bachelor of Veterinary Science (BVSc) degree at James Cook University (JCU) between 2006 and 2014. A series of univariate (chi-square and one-way ANOVA) and multivariate (CHAID classification trees) statistical tests were used to assess whether there were differences in the outcomes for students with different demographic characteristics and educational backgrounds. Of all students who commenced a BVSc degree between 2006 and 2008, 74% had completed the course by 2014. In contrast to the literature, prior to 2012 the majority of students withdrew from the course after successfully completing first year and subsequently failing in second year or beyond. From 2013 onwards, it appears that the majority of students that left the course, do so before commencement of second year. This coincides with a major curriculum review that was implemented in 2013 aiming to better prepare students to the integrated nature of the veterinary curriculum typical of JCU's program after Year 1. The cohorts of students that have enrolled in the BVSc degree are quite diverse compared to the broader sector and the student body at JCU. Tertiary entry scores, students' commencing age and their home locality were the only independent predictors of performance in the course. Otherwise students' demographic characteristics (students' gender, country of birth, indigenous, disability and non-English speaking background status, and regional and socioeconomic background) had no effect on success in the course. These results suggest that the JCU veterinary course does not bias for or against the diverse demographic background of commencing students and hence ensures reasonable number of graduates with rural or remote origins which was part of the rationale for the courses' establishment. It is proposed to embed more blended learning activities in the curriculum to specifically support educationally disadvantaged students through the course.