A (farewell) word from the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning

A/Prof Naomi Trengove

This will be the “final” word from me as Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning, as my time in this position has come to an end.

The last two years have been a time of considerable change with the advent of the new Future Framework. The Faculty has been asked to rethink every aspect of its teaching and learning, starting with the undergraduate courses in Health Sciences and the Science majors requiring a complete overhaul culminating in the submission of completely new majors suited to the future framework structure. This will hopefully reduce teaching loads and will also create exciting new learning opportunities for students.

Among the proposals submitted is the new major in Medical Science. This innovative major will be taught across disciplines with an emphasis on the scientific basis of disease and pharmaco-therapeutics. Disciplines which under the current degree structure cannot teach in any undergraduate science course will have the opportunity to do so for the first time. With their wealth of research knowledge the disciplines are well-placed to contribute to the training of our future medical scientists, and provide a potential pool of suitably trained graduates for post-graduate study across the Faculty.

The next great challenge will be the development of postgraduate courses for the professional degrees. This concept has been embraced across the faculty, with the disciplines of Medicine, Dentistry and Podiatry holding retreats to determine the fundamental structures of their respective new courses.

The new year will no doubt see a great deal of activity as each discipline moves forward in designing their new curriculum. The Faculty will be organising forums and workshops so that planning can take place in an informed manner.

If my experience of the past two years is any indication, 2014 will be upon us very soon!

The role of Associate Dean has been one of the most challenging but also rewarding positions I have held. It has allowed me develop not only as an educator but also as a person and it has provided me with the opportunity to work closely with many special people within the Faculty. I am grateful for their tremendous support. Similarly, it has been a privilege and source of joy to work closely with the student societies.

There certainly have not been (m)any ‘dull moments’ and I have no doubt that the experience I have gained in this role will stand me in good stead to face any future challenges.

New learning resource to assist with clinical teaching: ‘Answering Clinical Questions’

A web-based resource to support teaching and learning of evidence based practice (EBP) skills across all disciplines at FMDHS will be launched in January. The Answering Clinical Questions (ACQ) learning resource is available via the FMDHS website at http://www.meddent.uwa.edu.au/teaching/acq

The aim of ACQ is to:
- improve the students’ skills in EBP
- communicate the FMDHS approach to EBP
- provide a common terminology
- offer a range of resources to support EBP clinical teaching

Key objectives in the design process have been to make the ACQ resource accessible, easy to use, comprehensive, practical, and applicable to all year levels.

The clinical content has been structured into four sequential learning modules:
- Formulate a clinical question
- Find the best evidence
- Appraise the evidence
- Apply the evidence

ACQ has been designed to accommodate evidence based practice across the Faculty. The learning modules are multidisciplinary.

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High-tech revolution in dentistry: better training and objective assessment of practical work

A/Prof Erica Yates

Have you ever wanted to pick up a high speed handpiece and give dentistry a go?

Well you can now in the pre-clinical training area at the School of Dentistry. With the support of a Teaching and Learning Grant from the Faculty of MDHS, Virtual Realty Based Technology (VRBT) in the form of a DentSim unit has arrived. Even without much in the way of theory, anyone can pick up the handpiece and with a little on the spot instruction, can be a dentist in the virtual world in a very short space of time.

With the inherent difficulties in achieving assessment of students’ preclinical practical work in Operative Dentistry, Associate Professor Erica Yates searched for a method that would satisfy the students’ desire of objective and ‘on demand’ assessment of the preparations they submit for both formative and summative evaluation of competencies. Her search has identified a computerised system which can assess not only the final outcomes, but also the process of creating the final product: The (virtual) procedure can be replayed as many times as necessary to identify/demonstrate and analyse problem aspects being performed.

Apart from these obvious benefits, there are other advantages as Associate Professor Yates explains: “The current generation of students is very much at home in a world of multimedia and they expect a learning experience which harnesses all that the digital age has to offer. The ability to have three dimensional images which can be viewed from any direction is just one of the advantages for both students and tutors. With this technology students no longer have to wait for a tutor to be available to offer advice, all they do is turn to the computer monitor and click on the required icons and a progress assessment is made available with exact identification of the sites that need correction.”

Not surprisingly this speeds up the training process, and international research has shown that the preclinical training time for Operative and Restorative Dentistry can be cut by forty per cent.

The significant reduction of required training hours though the use of this innovative technology offers benefits beyond financial savings: it would clearly facilitate the transition from our current undergraduate five year dentistry course to the four year graduate programme under the future framework.

As the winner of a 2009 Faculty Teaching and Learning grant, Associate Professor Yates will have the opportunity to research the introduction of DentSim further: “This way of teaching students is the first major change in sixty years of teaching in this discipline. Until now, although the equipment used has changed over time, the actual method of training has not. The apprenticeship to becoming a dentist entailed following instructions from lectures, two-dimensional diagrams and copying models. Now it has become a multimedia event not unlike Nintendo Wii! So the question is asked, will the students like the experience? Our research aim is to determine attitudes of the various student groups to the new technology.”
In the ongoing quest to enhance student learning, Assistant Professor Zarrin Siddiqui and her team developed the PRAiSE project, which promotes better assessment practices by providing resources for academics to adopt some new and innovative methods of assessment.

Support from the Education Centre has always been available through regular programs and professional development activities, as well as one on one support to the Faculty teaching staff throughout the year. The PRAiSE project complements this support, by addressing the needs identified by academic staff to have assessment resources available at their fingertips, so as to promote better assessment practices for student learning.

The project comprised four different components:

1. a survey about assessment practices
2. an ‘assessment week ’ in July 2009 at which daily workshops and sessions were arranged.
3. a trial of some new and innovative methods of assessment, including collaborative assessment with Assoc. Prof. Lena Lejmonowski (Dentistry), Modified Essay Questions online with Assoc. Prof. Millicent Taylor (Dentistry), Portfolio assessment (Health Professional Education) and online formative assessments with Assoc. Prof. Jonathan Laugharne (Psychiatry).
4. development of online modules on how to use different methods of assessment through the UWA Learning Management System.

Feedback from academics has been very positive and they also indicated that PRAiSE not only provides useful information related to assessment, but also an insight into what e-learning options can be used to engage students who are studying online.

Since its inception, the project has been widened to include information about developments and events in health professional education, and links to relevant organisations and resources globally. It is expected that this resource will ultimately become available to the university community for their professional development and further contribution. To access to the PRAiSE assessment resource please send an email to Zarrin.siddiqui@uwa.edu.au including your UWA staff identification number.

New learning resource to assist with clinical teaching: ‘Answering Clinical Questions’ continued from page 1

Resource material within the learning modules is available for medicine, dentistry, podiatric medicine, nursing and physiotherapy (and can be expanded further as necessary). Materials include a glossary, clinical examples, direct links to UWA information resources (such as Dynamed, Clin-eguide and Medline), printable guides, and worksheets to assist with critical appraisal.

ACQ is being developed by a small group led by Professor Anna Nowak (Professor, Medical Oncology), Diana Jonas-Dwyer, (Associate Professor, Medical Education), and Carol Newton-Smith (Manager, Medical and Dental Library) on behalf of the Evidence Based Medicine (EBM) working party. Comments on ACQ and contributions to the resources sections are welcome. Please contact Carol Newton-Smith cnewtonsmith@library.uwa.edu.au

A comprehensive dissemination plan is being developed. Professor Anna Nowak (email: anowak@uwa.edu.au) welcomes invitations to demonstrate ACQ, (including suggestion on how this resource can be integrated into your teaching practice) for clinical teaching staff and colleagues.
**Calendar of Events**

**Study Day for Unit Coordinators**

The staff of the Education Centre are planning to conduct a study day on **Friday 12th February 2010**. It is aimed at assisting unit coordinators in their role. Topics including linking learning outcomes to assessment tasks, enhancing feedback for students, curriculum development, teaching methods and eLearning will be covered. All unit coordinators – whether new to the position or experienced – are invited. Please email Sue Miller at sue.miller@uwa.edu.au to register your interest in attending.

**‘Talking About Teaching’ series: Staff Development Workshops:**

The Education Centre runs a series of ‘Talking about Teaching’ workshops/seminars to support the development of teaching skills for academic, clinical academic and sessional teaching staff. To register your interest, email ully.fritsch@uwa.edu.au

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<td>Assessment of Group Projects</td>
<td>Asst/Prof Zarrin Siddiqui</td>
<td>Thursday 11th February 3.00pm – 5.00pm</td>
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<td>Using Mini Clinical Exercises for performance based assessment</td>
<td>Asst/Prof Zarrin Siddiqui</td>
<td>Wednesday 17th February 3.00pm – 5.00pm</td>
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<td>Unravelling curriculum development and course design: re-designing your unit</td>
<td>A/Prof Annette Mercer</td>
<td>Thursday 18th February 4.00pm – 5.30pm</td>
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<td>Case based learning</td>
<td>A/Prof Sandra Carr</td>
<td>4th March 12noon – 1.30pm</td>
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<td>Peer observation of teaching – getting started</td>
<td>A/Prof Annette Mercer</td>
<td>Monday 8th March 4.00pm – 5.30pm</td>
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<td>Assessment and feedback for sessional teachers</td>
<td>Asst/Prof Sue Miller</td>
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<td>Enhancing feedback for students</td>
<td>A/Prof Sandra Carr</td>
<td>Wednesday 17th March 9.30am – 11.00am</td>
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<td>Small group teaching: Discussion and student engagement for sessional teachers</td>
<td>Asst/Prof Sue Miller</td>
<td>Tuesday 30th March 5.00pm – 6.00pm</td>
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<td>Small group teaching: Management and student engagement for sessional teachers</td>
<td>Asst/Prof Sue Miller</td>
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