A word from the Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning

A/Prof Naomi Trengove

On the 19th August the Vice-Chancellor announced the implementation date for the new course restructure as 2012. This will result in profound changes for the delivery of teaching at UWA. Most significantly for our Faculty it will mean the move from undergraduate to post graduate courses for Medicine, Dentistry and Podiatry. With the implementation date now set, it will be possible for the Faculty to start planning for the curriculum changes that will be implemented in the future. Planning for this important transition is currently underway and the Dean is examining a number of transition models.

The most immediate result of this announcement affects those disciplines that will deliver units in the new Bachelor of Science Degree (Pharmacology, Pathology and Population Health). There will be significant changes to the undergraduate majors and detailed planning for this process is already underway. Expressions of interest for undergraduate majors are due in October, submissions will be reviewed by the Board of Coursework Studies and it is likely that this will be an interactive process requiring ongoing refinement before the final format of the majors is approved.

No doubt this process poses many challenges; at the same time, however, it provides a marvellous opportunity for a fundamental review of the way in which we currently teach courses, be it in undergraduate majors or in the professional degrees.

Workshops and working parties will be formulated in the coming months and I would urge all academics involved in undergraduate teaching to engage in this process for the best possible outcome.

Professional development activities

Teach smarter not harder:
For a calendar of upcoming Staff Development Workshops, refer to the back of this issue.

Nail Surgery Program ‘up and running’

A/Prof Sandra Carr

The FMDHS Teaching and Learning Grant in 2008 enabled the establishment of a nail surgery program for Level 4 Podiatric Medicine students in 2009. Performing nail surgery is an essential competency for graduating podiatry students, however there were limited available learning opportunities for students to practise this and other surgical podiatric skills in the relatively new UWA podiatry clinic. The Podiatry Departments of Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital, Royal Perth Hospital, Fremantle Hospital and Swan Districts Hospital have all commenced nail surgery opportunities for the Level 4 students in 2009. “While there have been some challenges, with continuation of the sessions throughout second semester every student will have observed and assisted in a number of cases and have performed a minimum of one surgical procedure” says project leader Associate Professor Jennifer Bryant.

In preparation for attending the surgical sessions each student was taught essential surgical protocols including sterile technique, universal precautions, and gloving and gowning for surgery. Students were also instructed in nail surgery techniques using simulated learning opportunities including a suturing and cadaver surgery workshop run in collaboration with CTEC.

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Sarah Carter, a Level 4 student administering a ring-block injection of local anaesthetic and performing a nail procedure

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E-Modules in Geriatric Medicine
Natasha Watson, Project Officer

“We want more lectures”, “We want more tutorials”, “My tutor missed falls” “we hate webCT”! Sound familiar? Anecdotally these were some of the things our students were telling us about their teaching and learning experiences in geriatric medicine. We wanted to understand more about student’s preferences and confirm if this anecdotal feedback was reliable. With increasing numbers of medical students relative to the number of clinical academics and clinical teachers, traditional methods of course delivery are becoming more challenging. This means that new ways of effectively implementing education are needed.

Our research established that students in general are not inspired by the currently available online learning experiences. When asked to elaborate on this, student’s commented that online education modules are often not case-based, locally relevant, engaging or interactive.

Enter the new age of online education. These innovative modules are 100% case-based and locally relevant. They take the student through a virtual case from presentation and assessment through to diagnosis and multi-disciplinary management.

To overcome the problem that too many online modules are text heavy and didactic in nature, those created by WACHA using our Teaching and Learning Committee grant require students to be actively engaged in the learning process. For example, the student takes a virtual history, by ‘clicking’ on the answers they wish to ask the patient, to reveal the response and the rationale for asking the question. They may also be required to select the most appropriate statements or questions to use in discussing difficult or sensitive issues, such as palliative care and delivering diagnoses. The aim of this is to encourage students to think about how they approach and interact with patients and to improve their verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

The student can then conduct a ‘virtual examination’, by moving the cursor over relevant body parts of the virtual patient (see image) in order to receive examination results.

Based on information obtained through taking a history and conducting a physical examination, relevant investigations can then be ordered by clicking on each test, whereby the results and imaging (if relevant) are revealed.

Questions are provided at various stages throughout the modules to encourage students to employ deductive reasoning and/or to apply their knowledge to make decisions about the case progression.

The modules will cover essential components of the Geriatric Medicine curriculum relevant to students in the faculty’s courses. Each of the modules has a focus on multi-disciplinary care, requiring students to review the assessments and management plans of a number of different specialties. An understanding of and commitment to multi-disciplinary teamwork is essential in providing the best possible care for the older patient.

The cases also challenge students to think about their own attitudes towards ageing and encourage the adoption of positive attitudes towards elderly people. Wherever possible, the concept of successful or healthy ageing is promoted. The biggest challenge of the project was to develop the module content in such a way that it would be suitable for students from across all disciplines.

The e-ageing project has been successful in progressing the development of content for the 11 modules relevant to aged care. The completed modules will be available to students of all health and medical disciplines. More information will be available shortly at www.wacha.org.au
Effective Curriculum Development

By A/Prof Annette Mercer

Effective curriculum development in the modern paradigm focuses on aligning the various elements of the teaching/learning programme to produce the required learning outcomes for the students. Such a process usually starts with the question: What do we want the students to know or be able to do by the end of this course/unit/module?

The students are central to this process and an analysis of the skills, knowledge and experience they bring with them, the intent of the course and a clear statement of the appropriate learning outcomes, provides a good starting point for further development of the curriculum. Other aspects which need to be clarified and aligned are the teaching methodologies, the assessment, the resources (human, physical, electronic etc) and the methods which will be used to evaluate and refine the process over time.

Elements such as content and organisation of units within a course can be reviewed and refined by using curriculum maps to overview the structure and to check for logical development and omissions. Working on the principle that the whole is greater than the sum of the parts, such processes are best implemented collaboratively to produce an effective result. Furthermore, the ethos and values of the institution and the faculty will help to shape the way in which all the various elements are organized and operationalised.

A workshop will be held on Tuesday October 20 in the Alpha Seminar Room, (P Block, QEII) from 2pm to 3.30pm to introduce all the concepts underpinning curriculum development. Participants will have the opportunity to discuss with colleagues the various aspects of curriculum development referred to above and to consider how to apply them to their own units. Further information is available by contacting the facilitator, Associate Professor Annette Mercer, at annette.mercer@uwa.edu.au

For possible alternative times for workshops on Curriculum Development please contact Ully Fritsch, Acting Manager of the Education Centre, at ully.fritsch@uwa.edu.au

Nail Surgery Program ‘up and running’

Podiatric Medicine Unit (PMU) staff together with an orthopaedic surgeon and a colorectal surgical registrar, conducted the cadaver surgery workshop.

“The project has substantially enhanced students’ clinical learning experiences” says Professor Alan Bryant (Head of PMU). “Students have been involved in the whole continuum of care from initial assessment of surgical patients through to post operative care. The students have also had opportunities to practise and consolidate their communication and teamwork skills with patients, colleagues and other hospital staff - this has been really valuable for our senior students”.

Future plans to extend the project include development of clear clinical pathways and the education of triage nurses and medical staff so as to increase the referral of patients to podiatry departments for toenail problems. Appointment of staff to establish the nail surgery program and development of supporting educational activities would not have been possible without the FMDHS Teaching and Learning Grant.

Meet one of our Masters in Health Professional Education students

Jenny Swan (pictured right) has more than 20 years clinical experience in acute and community Occupational Therapy and commenced the Masters course in 2009. Jenny’s work has included many hours devoted to the development of new graduate therapists, as well as the supervision of many undergraduate students. She believes that there is an on-going need for clinical skill development in new graduate therapists and that senior therapists devote a great deal of time to this.

Jenny says of the course … “the interaction between staff and other students was great: As a first foray back into the world of academia in a long time, I was pleased to find myself amidst many similar souls! The Education Centre staff were approachable and supportive. I have increased understanding of how learning happens and how it can be facilitated. It has given me greater insight into how to approach this complex area with my staff. By getting it ‘right’ I hope to be able to put systems in place that optimise the learning outcomes, and ultimately decrease the time taken to develop and teach new staff.”

In addition Jenny has found the insights from students working in other health professions helpful when considering options. “There is a danger of becoming insular without input from more diverse areas. Different disciplines have often tended to develop different strategies in their educational pathways, and it can be useful to consider a broad range of approaches to teaching in our own discipline.”
Calendar of Events

'Talking about Teaching' series: Staff Development Workshops

The Education Centre runs a series of Talking about Teaching workshop/seminars to support the development of teaching skills for academic, clinical academic and sessional teaching staff.

To register your interest in attending, contact Vivien Alexander at least 2 weeks before the seminar is scheduled.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Seminar/Workshop</th>
<th>Facilitator</th>
<th>Date/Time</th>
<th>Venue</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Unravelling curriculum development and course design: “re-designing your unit”</td>
<td>A/Prof Annette Mercer</td>
<td>Tues 20th October 2.00pm – 3.30pm</td>
<td>Alpha room, P Block, QE II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Peer Observation of Teaching (P.O.T): How to get started</td>
<td>A/Prof Annette Mercer</td>
<td>Thurs 22nd October 3.00pm – 4.30pm</td>
<td>Beta room, P Block, QE II</td>
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<tr>
<td>Discussion and Student Engagement Workshop</td>
<td>Asst/Prof Sue Miller</td>
<td>Tues 27th October 12.00pm – 1.00pm</td>
<td>Conf Room, N Block, QE II</td>
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Postgraduate Courses in Health Professional Education

Information evening

The Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, with the Faculty of Education, offer the following Health Professional Education postgraduate courses in 2010:

Graduate Certificate
Graduate Diploma
Master’s degree (by coursework or research)

These courses suit a range of health professionals and those considering applying are encouraged to attend an information evening:

Tuesday, 13 October 2009 at 4.30pm
Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences Conference Room, QEII Medical Centre, N Block
RSVP to Marisa Gulluni, Course Administrative Officer: marisa.gulluni@uwa.edu.au or 9346 2621
Further information: http://www.meddent.uwa.edu.au
Applications for enrolment are now open.

Scholarships for Postgraduate Studies in Teaching and Learning

Are you considering further study in teaching and learning?

If yes, the suite of postgraduate courses in Health Professional Education offered by the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences, in collaboration with the Faculty of Education, may be of interest to you!

These courses were designed to suit a broad range of health professionals interested in improving their knowledge and skills as teachers and/or educational researchers. To support the professional development of Faculty teaching staff, we offer four, half-tuition scholarships for the Graduate Certificate. The general conditions for scholarships for coursework students apply, except as set out in the specific conditions that follow.

The value of the scholarship is half the tuition fees for the Graduate Certificate in Health Professional Education ($2,700 in 2009). Recipients are required to meet the remaining course costs. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of academic merit and/or other achievements related to the education of health professionals. To be eligible to apply for a scholarship an applicant must be either a part-time or full-time member of the Faculty of Medicine, Dentistry and Health Sciences and directly involved in undergraduate or postgraduate teaching. This may include class-based or clinical education. The award is for a maximum of up to one year. An extension of up to six months may be granted.

Applications close on 31 October 2009. The application form is available at http://www.meddent.uwa.edu.au/teaching/centre/courses/scholarships. Please phone Marisa Gulluni on 9346 2621 if you have any further queries.

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