



Student Success

A journal exploring the experiences of students in tertiary education

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Editorial

Inclusion in Scopus

Welcome to the first issue of *Student Success* for 2019. We are very pleased to bring you another wonderful selection of high quality articles focused on research, innovation and evidence-based good practice about students' tertiary learning experiences. This issue of the Journal continues our commitment to publishing articles that are aligned with the Journal's scope and aims, and it maintains the Journal's unique role in disseminating important work that may not be within the scope of other higher education titles. On this basis, we are delighted to let you know that we were advised that the Journal, after a rigorous process, has been successfully evaluated for inclusion in Scopus. Scopus is the largest abstract and citation database of peer-reviewed literature and being included in its database is excellent news for our authors. For example, papers published in *Student Success* will be able to be found in searches using the Scopus database and authors will be able to track citations of their papers over time.

As a Journal team, we know the importance of understanding similarities and differences in different tertiary sectors, and by sharing global practices through the publications that appear in this Journal, we aim to provide valuable and transferrable knowledge for our readers. We will continue to emphasise the international appeal of the Journal and continue to encourage submissions from outside of Australasia. It is therefore also very pleasing that this tenth volume includes a number of international papers.

2019 is going to be another busy year for the Journal publishing three issues in total. In addition to this first issue, in July, the best peer-reviewed papers and emerging initiatives from the International STARS Conference (7-10 July, Melbourne, Australia) will be

published in the Conference issue, and in December we look forward to bringing you a special issue *Psychological Wellbeing and Distress in Higher Education*. This special issue will draw together current insights on the relationship between student wellbeing and student outcomes as well as highlight new practice about how educators can, and are, improving student wellbeing.

During 2019, we will continue to focus on publishing quality research and evidence-based reports of good practice that can be transferred or applied to other learning and teaching environments. We are very grateful to our Journal Advisory Board for their advice and for their championing of the Journal. We also acknowledge the tireless efforts of all members of the Editorial team in fostering quality research and practice. Importantly, we sincerely thank all the peer reviewers who assess the quality and originality of articles for publication and particularly in doing so for providing positive and useful feedback to authors.

Feature Practice Report

In Australia, Victoria University (VU) has recently commenced a radical approach to promoting student retention and success. An unusual learning and teaching model has been implemented that re-conceptualises the design, structure and delivery of first year units of study in order to deliver a program with a deliberate focus on students' pedagogical, transition and work/life balance needs.

At VU, students are taught one subject at a time in a two to four week 'block' rather than taking several subjects at a time over what is normally a ten to 13 week semester. This block model is new to mainstream Australian higher education, although similar models of teaching and learning exist in other countries. *Re-building the first year experience, one block at a time* details the impetus for

program, the organisational change required to facilitate the model and importantly, some early outcomes which suggest significant improvements in student engagement and results. Authors **Trish McClusky, John Weldon and Andrew Smallridge** recognise that the ultimate outcome of the block model is to increase student learning outcomes, especially for those students at risk of attrition.

Articles

The decision to go to university can occur anytime in the student lifecycle and can be precipitated by widening participation (WP) activities during secondary education. In *Are university widening participation activities just-in-time or just-out-of-time?* **Maria Raciti and Joshua Dale** examined qualitative data collected from 46 students enrolled at six universities in the state of Queensland, Australia in order to understand if there is a (mis)alignment between the timing of WP activities and university decision-making among students from low socioeconomic status (LSES) backgrounds.

Access to university is also dependent on the student service models in place to facilitate transition. In *Evaluating the student experience with enrolment assistance in an integrated student support service program at the University of Southern Queensland* **Anbarasu Thangavelu, Helen Partridge, Kathy Carey, Carmel O'Sullivan and Naomi Lutvey** detail their institution's response to student attrition with discussion of a specific program to address issues with late enrolment. Assistance with late enrolment is indicative of the targeted but timely support which requires effective design and implementation in order to cater to diverse needs.

From the United Kingdom **Grant Bage** examines the place and potential of research in undergraduate degrees. In *Putting research first? Perspectives from academics and students on first-year undergraduates learning research* Bage's exploration of first year teaching and learning, through the lenses of critical inquiry and constructivist grounded theory, considers whether undergraduate students should be asked to learn from their own or others' research, and critiques what difficulties they may experience.

In *Evaluating nursing students' engagement in an online course using flipped virtual classrooms* **Craig Phillips and Jacqueline O'Flaherty** from the University of South Australia suggest that flip teaching in a virtual classroom has the potential to effectively engage learners in deep learning approaches, compared to those in more traditional non-flipped virtual or face-to-face classrooms.

Recommendations are made about the timing of the introduction of fully online delivery in a program and the need for continual up-skilling of staff who teach in online environments.

Also from the University of South Australia, **Amanda Richardson, Sharron King, Tim Olds, Gaynor Parfitt and Belinda Chiera** detail their institutional study to understand how students allocate their time on a day-to-day basis and how this might enable more effective support for students in making these changes. Over 400 students were involved in a longitudinal cohort study which followed a group of Australian first year university students through the course of an academic year.

Well-being amongst first year university students as they transition from secondary to tertiary education is the focus of *Subjective well-being among first-year university students: A two-wave prospective study in Flanders, Belgium*. Authors **David De Coninck, Koen Matthijs and Patrick Luyten** focus on the links between parental relationships, academic and social integration of undergraduate students and recommend a range of strategies with a positive impact on well-being.

Student anxiety and self-efficacy is also examined by **Cara Rummey, Tristan Clemons and Dino Spagnoli** from The University of Western Australia, who focused on the learning environment and in this case, working in laboratories. In *The impact of several demographic factors on chemistry laboratory anxiety and self-efficacy in students' first year of university* the authors surveyed students at the start and end of a semester to evaluate levels of anxiety and self-efficacy. Their results are of interest to any discipline that offers an unfamiliar learning environment for students as aspects such as time management and answering assessed questions are not discipline specific.

Enabling courses are offered to assist with the upskilling and transition of non-traditional students. From Central Queensland University, Australia **Trixie James and Karen Seary** detail a research project to understand enabling students' conceptions of the benefits of attending face-to-face, on-campus classes and the factors that influence their choices to attend in *Why aren't they attending class like they are supposed to? A review into students' perception of the value of class attendance*. The findings indicate that quality teaching practices, which include engaging andragogical approaches, reflective practices, and perceived ongoing support, are vital to engage students and contribute to attendance at internal classes.

Practice Reports

From Ireland **James Brunton, Mark Brown, Eamon Costello** and **Orna Farrell** discuss the development of the Head Start Online MOOC at Dublin City University, an initiative targeting flexible learners during the initial stages of the study life-cycle. The MOOC was developed as part of the [Student Success Toolbox](#) project which produced a suite of digital readiness tools as Open Educational Resources (OERs).

Retention is the focus of **Jamie McLeod's** discussion on the redesign of an introductory course for students commencing at a community college in North Carolina, United States. The results of inserting program-specific, contextualised modules and instructors into an online student success course have indicated a measurable benefit to next-semester retention with favorable feedback from faculty members.

Peer mentoring as a mechanism of support as students' transition through and out of university is detailed through the exploration of a peer mentoring program for honours students. From Sydney, Australia **Shaun Yon-Seng Khoo, Jenna Zhao, Adrian Walker, Jessica Kirkman** and **Branka Spehar** detail their development of a Graduate/Honours Peer Mentoring program for psychology honours students to facilitate their transition into the research environment and their transition out of undergraduate study by discussing options for employment or further study.

Preparing students for careers is also the focus for authors **Carmen Huffman, April Tallant** and **Shawna Young** who present 'DegreePlus', a program designed to

provide transferable skill development to students at Western Carolina University in the United States through their participation in designated extracurricular activities. The program aims to make students career-ready by developing transferable skills through their participation in extracurricular experiences.

We hope you enjoy reading this rich range of papers and find some gems of new knowledge or practice that you can use in your environment to enhance tertiary student outcomes.

Karen Nelson
Editor-in-chief

Tracy Creagh
Journal Manager

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