RUN LEARNING AND TEACHING AWARDS 2023

Name: Erin Siostrom

Institution: University of the Sunshine Coast

Title: Relevant and authentic pathways to first year courses

Application Category: Regional Education

Abstract: The establishment of a new UniSC campus at Moreton Bay saw a high proportion of first in family student enrolments (50% of cohort) into my Tertiary Preparation Pathway TPP105 Statistics course. This group struggled to relate the value of Statistics to their future study pathways and recorded a significantly higher FL rate compared with other campuses.

As coordinator, I identified and addressed this by developing authentic context-based learning experiences related to the undergraduate disciplines these students most commonly progressed into (science, nursing, psychology, and education). Students developed contextual understanding of the content by applying statistics the way a scientist, nurse, psychologist, or teacher would. For example, future science students explored graphing and population modelling of native Australian animal species, and future nursing students used statistics to predict blood pressure variation and medication effectiveness.

This targeted intervention reframed statistics into a useful tool for first-generation students' future career pathways. This resulted in increased engagement and success, demonstrated by a sustained 40% decrease in FL rates for the Moreton Bay first in family student cohort. Success was also evidenced by positive student evalu8 feedback, acknowledgement by school leadership and commendation from course coordinators of programs that our students feed into.

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