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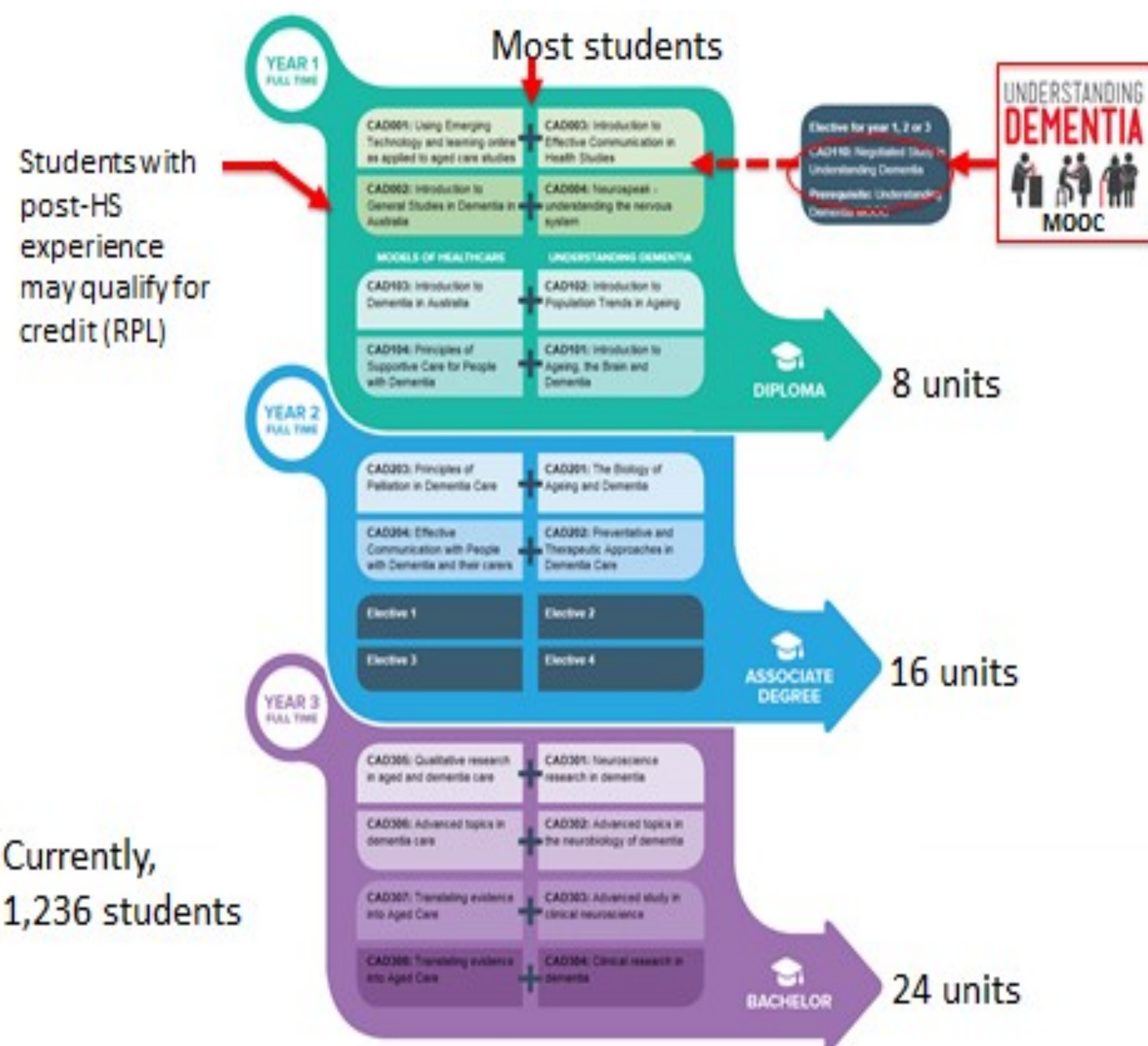
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Background

The fully-online Bachelor of Dementia Care (BDC) program is designed to attract and support adults who provide direct care for people with dementia. The BDC offers a unique interdisciplinary approach to facilitate these non-traditional students' understanding of the changes that occur in the brain, how these changes affect daily function and behaviour, and the need for evidence-based, person-centred care to optimize quality-of-life for people with dementia.



Objectives: To document the performance of non-traditional students who have successfully completed Diploma, Associate, and Bachelor of Dementia Care Degrees, and reasons for their engagement.



Methods

Quantitative and qualitative data were obtained from students' grades and responses to surveys as students completed their chosen program of study.

Results

In 2012, 192 students were enrolled.

In 2016, ~1,500 students participate; 98% in Australia; 83% studying part-time; 92% ≥ 41 years of age; 93% female; 67% caring for people with dementia.

Six students have graduated with a Bachelor Degree with 109 set to graduate in 2016/17; 38 have exited with an Associate Degree, and 166 with a Diploma.

There is a statistically significant ($p < .05$) difference between the Grade Point Average of Bachelor and Diploma students, but not between Bachelor/Associate Degree or Associate Degree/Diploma students.

Results, continued

Students' primary reason for study was to learn more about dementia and effective care for people with dementia (88%); 54% sought to obtain a qualification for career advancement; 28% to achieve more workplace recognition.

78% agreed/strongly agreed that their learning was relevant and applicable to their workplace. Students' comments on discussion boards and reflective assignments document the impact of their learning in their translation of knowledge into evidence-based care.

Discussion

Data suggest non-traditional students are being supported to engage and succeed in tertiary education of relevance to their practice in dementia care. Investigation of relationships between student characteristics and success will continue.

Selected Reference

Goldberg, L.R., Carr, A.R., Canty, A.J., Klekociuk, S., Ward, D., Landowski, L., King, C., Vickers, J. (2015). Making neuroscience important and relevant: Online learning in an innovative Bachelor of Dementia Care program. *E-learning, E-Education and Online Training, Lecture Notes of the Institute for Computer Sciences, Social Informatics and Telecommunications Engineering*, 160, 84-91.

