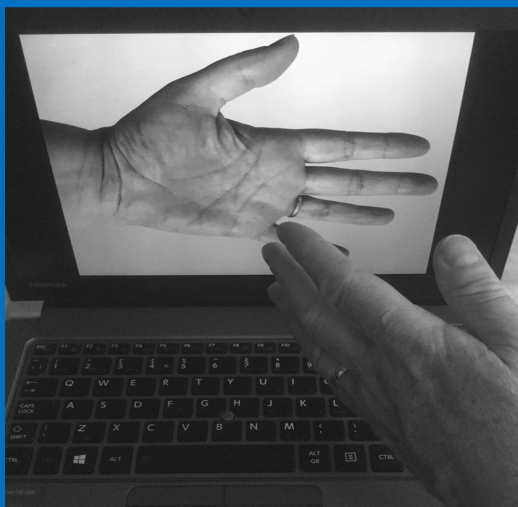


Virtual Engagement Learning Opportunities Pilot: The Collaborative Experiences of Student Nurses in the United Kingdom and New Zealand

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Abstract It is important for undergraduate (UG) nursing students to gain competency to practice as connected professionals and to have a global perspective on health and nursing. However, student exchanges are expensive and therefore not feasible. Senior UG nursing students from the United Kingdom and New Zealand (n=15) had the opportunity to develop an eNetwork using audio/video-conferencing. Students were allocated to a small group and given weekly discussion topics during a month long learning activity. An anonymous on-line survey comprising of Likert scale questionnaire and open ended questions provided evaluation data. **Conclusion** All students reported that this collaborative activity enabled them to engage purposefully with other students. While cultural differences were noted, similarities were also found and a number of students expressed interest in working overseas. Limitations included managing time differences when using synchronous audio/video-conferencing.

Background Information and communication technology (ICT) mediums, such as Skype, can provide opportunities for engagement across the globe [1]. Health professional students, including nurses, are considered 'digital natives' as they utilise a range of internet-sourced communication mediums to support their knowledge development and interaction with others [2]. Extending the use of ICT provides an opportunity for health professional students to collaborate demonstrating international eNetwork.



Aim The aim of the study was to provide students with a weekly e-learning activity to provide a more global perspective of nursing and healthcare utilising international e-collaboration.

Method Small convenience sample of senior UG nursing students from both Universities (n=15).

Weekly topics discussed Nurse education, current/future health issues, how can ICT impact on healthcare, sharing experiences

"we're not different in general terms"

"interesting to hear how the programme works"

"what nursing is like overseas"

"opened my mind to working overseas"

"The importance of Maori culture"

"Building connections with nurses overseas"

Student Evaluation (1 - Strongly disagree, 2 - Disagree, 3 - Neutral, 4 - Agree, 5 - Strongly Agree)		1	2	3	4	5	Mean
1	The collaborative learning activity enabled me to engage purposefully with other nursing students	0	0	0	4	9	4.69
2	Other nursing students contributed to my learning through the online collaborative learning activity	0	1	1	4	7	4.31
3	Information on how to participate in the collaborative learning activity was clear	0	0	4	3	6	4.15
4	I received adequate support to participate in this collaborative learning activity	0	0	4	3	6	4.15
5	The collaborative learning activity will help me prepare for nursing in the future	0	2	3	5	3	3.69
6	The collaborative learning activity provided me with the opportunity to learn about student nurse experiences from an international perspective	0	0	0	3	10	4.77
7	Using ICT for virtual meetings with other international nursing students was a positive learning experience	0	0	3	4	6	4.23
8	Overall, this collaborative learning activity was a relevant addition to the course	0	0	2	6	5	4.23
9	I plan to keep in touch with some of the students I have met	1	1	6	4	1	3.23
10	I would recommend other student nurses participate in future collaborative learning activities with international nursing students	0	0	0	4	9	4.69

Themes	Comments
Cultural differences	"Cultural differences were interesting"
International connections and future employment	"gain insight to opportunities available once qualified in a global context"
Benefits of e-engagement	"being able to discuss similarities and differences between nursing in the respective countries"
Limitations of e-engagement	"timing at times was difficult"
Maintaining new relationships	"Building connections with nurses overseas"

"it's great to talk to like-minded people with the same passion for peoples health"



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2. S. Bennett, K.A. Maton, L. Kervin, The digital natives debate: A critical review of the evidence, British Journal of Educational Technology 39, (2008), 775-786.



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