ACADEMIC INNOVATION PROJECT - REPORT 2021-22

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Humanising Healthcare

(Postgraduate Pharmacy Distance Learning)

What did you set out to do?

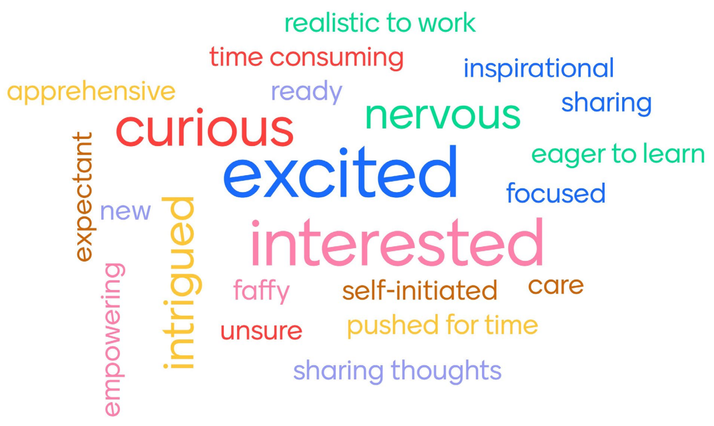
They key objectives of this project were to:

- Create an environment for postgraduate pharmacy students to engage with each other and academics earlier on in their learning journey;
- Increase their familiarity with digital technology which is increasingly infiltrating the healthcare arena
- Provide and facilitate a problem-based group learning exercise over an extended period of time (1 week) to provide a more realistic learning experience and an opportunity to reflect on their individual clinical practice and learning needs.

How have you achieved it?

The project was delivered to postgraduate pharmacy students at the beginning of undertaking their first 3-month module on the MSc in Clinical Pharmacy programme. Students whilst studying are also working as practicing pharmacists in patient facing roles. The project intervention involved providing students with a patient case through a 7-day intensive digital intervention via Microsoft Teams. Students were expected to complete tasks in their small groups and respond to information requests on a daily basis. This intervention was delivered to students in February 2022 with focus groups taking place in early March. The patient case and tasks were designed to encourage students to think and reflect on their approach to patient care, to help them to identify where to focus their professional development on, to begin to connect and work together and visualise their role within the global community. We are now working on analysing the data obtained from the focus groups.

Student feelings captured before the intervention



What next?

Where possible the project may be repeated taking into account feedback from students i.e.

- Provide a more comprehensive IT induction to increase student confidence with the technology before the project begins
- To encourage students to devise a plan of how they will contribute to the daily tasks and effectively communicate with group members alongside their professional and personal responsibilities

Benefits for the University

This model can easily be adapted by different disciplines and subject areas and would work well with undergraduate students who are unlikely to have the addition of managing full-time clinical practice alongside studying. The outcome of this activity will be evaluated to consider the benefits to implementing this learning approach more widely and could serve as best practice. The project and findings will be submitted for publication in a peer-reviewed journal.

Benefits for Subject Community

The benefits for the subject community is an innovative approach to engage students in a distance learning context by creating a virtual learning community. The approach brings the learning to life and is more reflective of real-life practice.

Benefits for Students

The benefit for students is the application and utilisation of theory learnt in an authentic problem-based learning (PBL) environment. Providing students with accountability for one patient over a longer period, will also allow them to see first-hand the impact of recommendations and interventions they are making. This provides a realistic hands-on experience enabling students to also consider psychosocial aspects of patient care and take a holistic approach to their clinical practice.
The frequent engagement and check-ins with students fosters a supportive environment, harnessing a co-creation approach. It also provided students with an opportunity to build relationships which can serve as a support network throughout their time at DMU and beyond.

Student feelings captured after the intervention

Benefits for Staff

Academics can see student interactions in real time, adapt and tailor teaching and support based on these observations immediately. They can also provide immediate feedback to students during the virtual communications.

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