

Building evidence-based practice capacity: a journal club for nursing and midwifery students

David Lindsay

James Cook University, QLD

The use of journal clubs in health professional education have been found to be effective forums for increasing information literacy, enhancing professional reading proficiency, improving critical thinking skills and exploring the links between research evidence and clinical practice. There is a growing body of research supporting the value of a journal club for undergraduates and virtual journal clubs (VJCs), using a synchronous (real-time) platform such as Blackboard Collaborate, together with asynchronous platforms such as blogs, wikis and Twitter, have been found to bridge the limitations associated with face to face contact, whilst creating a non-threatening environment that time-poor students can access at any time. The broad aims of the student journal club are to build information literacy and assist students to acquire knowledge and skills for critically appraising published research, and explore how it can contribute to evidence-informed decision making when planning and delivering patient/client care. The objectives are to:

- acquire skills in obtaining relevant information, organising it, and sharing it with others
- gain an understanding of research design, as described in various types of research publications
- share current knowledge and discuss ways of translating research evidence into practice
- improve professional reading habits and skills in using databases to locate high quality journal articles
- raise research awareness, and assist students to make clinical decisions that incorporate relevant research evidence
- become familiar with tools for undertaking critical appraisal of research publications
- develop understanding of the links between theory, research, practice and care quality improvement.

The student journal club will be implemented at the commencement of the first study period in February, 2015, as a voluntary, extra-curricular, active learning opportunity. Monthly, face to face meetings will be convened and students in Mackay, Mt Isa and Thursday Island linked in via videoconferencing. Academic

staff at each of these sites will assist students in their preparation for, and contributions during, journal club meetings. A virtual journal club will be run concurrently primarily for external students, but also made accessible to all on-campus students.

This presentation will outline the preliminary, evaluative findings following the establishment of the student journal club. Participants will be surveyed against the achievement of the above objectives, together with their experiences as remote area students engaging in the face to face and virtual components of the club. Based on this feedback, suggested areas for change will be proposed.