

Building evidence-based practice capacity: engaging rural and remote nursing students in a journal club

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Abstract: 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. This study reports on the establishment of a journal club in 2015 for undergraduate nursing and midwifery students at James Cook University.

Background

There is a growing body of research supporting the value of a journal club for health sciences undergraduates (Doughty, 2013), as well as for graduates working in the practice setting (Mattila et al., 2013). For health professional students in rural or remote areas, real time interaction using videoconferencing combined 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 (Dovi, 2014). When offered as a structured activity during students' rural/remote practicums, interprofessional journal clubs can also provide a forum for collaboration across health disciplines (Gum et al., 2013).

Launch of the Student Journal Club in the School of Nursing, Midwifery & Nutrition in 2015

- Non-curricular activity
- Sessions offered monthly, using a catered 1-hour 'Lunch and learn' approach
- Facilitated by an academic member of staff
- Sessions recorded and video-conferenced to remote sites, including Thursday Island, Mt Isa, Cloncurry and Mackay
- Dedicated blog and community site provide a virtual journal club presence online
- Appraisal template guides student review of the article
- Certificates of participation are provided to students, for inclusion in students' professional portfolios

Aim

The broad aim of the Student Journal Club (SJC) is to foster a culture of inquiry and develop skills for understanding published research and how it can contribute to evidence-based decision making by undergraduates.

How does it work?

Before the SJC session, students:

- Confirm intention to attend
- Obtain and read the assigned review article
- Complete the review using the allocated template
- Come prepared to actively engage in discussion about the article

During the SJC meeting, students:

- Actively contribute to the discussion, respecting the views and comments of others
- Clarify any unfamiliar concepts or terminology
- Discusses how the article topic and findings link to practice

Following the SJC meeting, students:

- Complete the evaluation form
- Contribute to the blog discussion
- Reflect upon the discussion, journal the key things they learnt at the meeting



The virtual journal club site

- ✓ Available to all staff and students
- ✓ Blackboard platform with announcements, session materials, email, blog and discussion board facilities
- ✓ Recordings of SJC sessions uploaded
- ✓ Contains journal articles and all associated documents

Where to from here?

- ❖ Offer to Postgraduate students, and students from other health disciplines to increase collaborative learning
- ❖ Broaden scope of articles to be appraised to include both primary and secondary literature pieces
- ❖ Integrate into curricula to scaffold student learning about research
- ❖ Mentor students to take on session facilitator role

References

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