Online & Engaged: A Communication Tool for Pharmacy Students

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Introduction  Observation and experiential learning are necessary to maximise learning of communication skills. The current Net Generation of students also expects the adoption of current technology in their courses. A Pharmacy Communication Tool offering digitised video scenarios of patient-pharmacist interactions was integrated into a pharmacy communications course and evaluated by students for its design, learning experience and value in assisting development of communication.

Methods  A cohort of 19 Graduate Diploma students exposed to the Communication Tool during the 2008/2009 Summer Semester Course prior to entering the Masters of Pharmacy program at Griffith University were surveyed. An online survey tool with a 5-point Likert scale was used.

Results  The Pharmacy Communication Tool was very well received and highly regarded.

- 72% strongly agreed/agreed that the tool was well designed and easy to navigate
- 93% strongly agreed/agreed that the tool was well integrated and complemented their whole learning experience within the course
- 86% strongly agreed/agreed that the tool assisted their development in communicating more successfully in a pharmacy practice setting
- 58% viewed each clip between 1-6 times in their own time
- The most useful video clip was “Questioning and Listening”

Conclusions  The Pharmacy Communication Tool provided a distinctive learning tool that was highly regarded by students, complemented the student learning experience and achieved improved learning outcomes.

Future Directions  Student survey results indicated that more examples and scenarios were warranted for the future. Fewer students accessed the online tool than anticipated, and the reasons for this need investigation.

Opportunities for Collaboration in Health  Effective communication skills are essential across all health disciplines. Five core communication skills were addressed in the current tool, and the platform allows for further examples to be included. A collaborative approach across health to identify both the key common; and discipline specific communication skills required by students to be effective practitioners in their chosen professions, would be valuable. Future opportunities include:

- Incorporation of the tool into other health communication courses
- Addition of video scenarios addressing further broad communication skills
- Expansion of the tool with the addition of further discipline specific video examples.