

TOWARDS FLEXIBILITY IN HIGHER EDUCATION

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Title and Presenter:

Demonstrating the flexibility of an outcome-based curriculum using a virtual learning environment

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Abstract:

Enquiry based learning (EBL) has a significant role to play in the development of critical decision making skills and team working. An enquiry based approach to learning embedded within an outcome based curriculum has the potential to bring the complex nature of health care into reality, allowing students to explore multi dimensional approaches to decision making and problem solving in healthcare.

An outcomes based competency approach to healthcare education is considered to be comprehensive, encouraging the development of knowledge, understanding, practical and technical skills, attitudes and values (UKCC 1999). Such an approach however, cannot always guarantee that curriculum content is wholly relevant to the needs of a changing healthcare environment. Upon registration, newly qualified healthcare practitioners are expected to possess critical decision making skills, and the skills associated with effective referral to other health professionals and agencies, alongside being able to undertake dynamic and collaborative approaches to providing effective health care.

In pre registration midwifery education, an EBL approach to learning is used within the virtual learning environment to expose students to a range of complex issues of pregnancy and childbirth. Congruence between theory and practice is developed, as students become exposed to the realities of practicing in situations of ambiguity and not knowing whilst having access to the appropriate resources to guide them in their decision making/problem solving processes.

This paper demonstrates the flexibility of an outcome-based curriculum in terms incorporating enquiry-based learning strategies through the use of a VLE.