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ORAL SESSION: Conference Theme 1

Title: GATES: An Online Step-wise Blackboard Tool to Develop Student Collaborative Teamwork Competencies

Content:

(max 250 words)

Background:

Interdisciplinary collaboration and communication are vital health graduate capabilities required for future professional pathways. However, students report problems with domineering team members, 'hitchhikers', non-cohesive strategies and divergent views,[1,2] leading to de-motivation, conflict and poor learning outcomes.[3,4] An online Blackboard tool incorporating five strategic 'gates' (Team structure, Communication, Leadership, Situation monitoring, and Mutual support was designed to support the social processes required for team cohesion in students doing group assessments.

Objectives:

To determine if the GATES 2.0 tool supported student group work collaborations and improved the group work experience.

Methodology:

GATES was embedded in the Blackboard sites of six QUT health units (courses) which had a group assessment task in 2017. Participants comprised six academics and 721 students. Data collection involved the completion of two online surveys – at the beginning and end of the semester. Both demographic and qualitative data were collected.

Results:

Students believed the tool improved group communication, organisation, and time management through development of action plans. However, GATES did not help resolve conflicts in a few groups, particularly those dealing with 'hitchhikers' and members producing poor quality work. Academics reported little need for facilitation of student groups and three reported less student emails regarding group issues.

Discussion:

There was evidence to support the use of the tool, however more resources need to be added to help students deal with group conflict. The tool would be more effective if the unit coordinators incorporated its use in tutorial activities so that it is not seen simply as an extra activity.

References:

[1] Oakley B, Felder RM, Brent R, Elhajj I. Turning student groups into effective teams. Journal of student centered learning. 2004;2(1):9-34.

[2] Freeman KA. Attitudes toward work in project groups as predictors of academic performance. Small Group Research. 1996;27(2):265-82.

[3] Scott-Ladd B, Chan CCA. Using action research to teach students to manage team learning and improve teamwork satisfaction. Active Learning in Higher Education. 2008;9(3):231-48.

[4] Burdett J, Hastie B. Predicting Satisfaction with Group Work Assignments. Journal of University Teaching and Learning Practice. 2009;6(1):61.

Which FIP Workforce Development Goal or Goals would you assign your abstract? (For

WDG5, WDG6, WDG8,

Example e.g. WDG2 , WDG3)	