

FROM PRACTICE TO EVIDENCE AND EVIDENCE TO PRACTICE: BACHELOR OF NURSING YEAR 3 EDUCATION AND POWERFUL ASSESSMENT

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INTRODUCTION

The focus of this case study, presents how best to equip the Bachelor of Nursing (BN) graduates to be meaningful contributors within the health care sector, whilst considering the social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges, that can hinder the provision of care for the people of Aotearoa, New Zealand. Registered Nurses (RN) use up to date evidence to inform their practice with the overall aim to improve the sustainability of health care for patients/clients/families/whanau and communities. A case study assessment based on real clinical problems is the focus of this assessment in which students' offer and develop evidence-based solutions is detailed. This case study demonstrates how third year student nurses are engaged in evidence-based assessment and evaluation, demonstrating its fitness of purpose: to prepare students to be work ready and further enable them to contribute to the growing evidence-based health care landscape as well as contributing to the knowledge generation of the nursing profession.

BACKGROUND

The BN programme is a three-year full time degree; learning includes both theoretical and practical application of technical skills that are taught at Otago Polytechnic through a number of interactive mediums. As students progress in the programme they apply their learning in various clinical settings. Clinical settings include primary (community including older adult residential facilities), secondary and tertiary (hospitals) levels of care both in the urban and rural contexts of the Otago and South Canterbury regions of the South Island. Successful completion of learning in years one and two of the BN programme (NZQA Level 500 and 600 respectively) is necessary before entry to year three (NZQA Level 700) can commence. The learning in years one and two creates a strong foundational knowledge for students entering year three. Year three directly brings together clinical practice, theoretical, research and scientific knowledge including ethical and professional responsibilities which enables students to apply and demonstrate the RNs competencies to practice, in their allocated clinical placements. On successful completion of the BN programme and passing the national state finals the graduates are eligible to register with the regulatory nursing body, the Nursing Council of New Zealand and are entered onto the national RN register and can practice as an RN.

CASE STUDY ASSESSMENT

This case study assessment showcases how I have endeavoured to ensure that education and assessment is powerful, in other words, meaningful for the student's learning and application in clinical practice and improves the purpose of the assessment and ultimately works in collaboration with industry.

The assessment has a purpose in that it meets the students' learning experience providing them an opportunity to engage with the wider health care industry and discuss their rationale for their individual chosen clinical problem, the evidence-based findings and recommendations in practice; through public exhibitions; at prospective interviews for employment and publication. The following questions related to discussing this powerful assessment are now presented:

- Who - Bachelor of Nursing (BN) third year students are the focus of this case study.
- What Third year BN students identify a clinical health care problem and work through a process to develop solution(s) while engaging with the best evidence-based research from national international literature and national and regional health care documents and policies.
- When The case study assessment invites the students at the completion of their second year of the degree (prior to commencing the third year of the BN programme) to critically reflect on their clinical experience and identify a problem in the clinical setting areas that could be improved; could be undertaken in a different way to current practice, or changed completely. The aim of this is to provide the students sufficient time to critically reflect on practice before commencing the third year of the BN programme and enable them to be prepared to embark on the assessment, at the commencement of the third year.
- Where The case study assessment aligns with the clinical health care place(ments) that students have encountered as a component of their clinical health care experience. The experiences the students encounter are in the community, mental, surgical and medical health care placements attached to rural and urban community and hospital settings.
- How The powerful case study assessment is a combination of three individual parts, but when combined together is representative of a powerful assessment that includes both formative and summative learning:

Part one

- Part one is a written essay and has a word limit of between 2800-3200. Student's focus on the individual identified clinical issue/problem (as discussed above) and critically discuss in writing their rationale for pursuing this problem.
- Students develop a question associated with the clinical problem and use the PICCO/T model which "is an acronym that describes the elements of a well-formed clinical question" (Riva et al., 2012 cited in Whitehead & Maude, 2016 p. 60) to assist them to narrow and refine this question in order to undertake an individual literature search. The literature search situates the identified clinical problem within the social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges, which can hinder the provision of health care related to the associated population and context. This review identifies the best evidence from the literature.
- The assessment requires the student to discuss the implications for practice based on the evidence outlined from the critically reviewed literature and further indicate what solutions (noted as recommendations) could impact positively upon the identified problem aligned with the specific clinical setting
- Students, summarise their recommendations and rationale related to the identified clinical problem and develop a solution orientated approach.
- At the completion of part one the student work is assessed against the marking criteria and feedback is provided from the lecturer marking team; represented as the formative learning process.

Part two

- Part two progresses the student assessment completed in part one to transfer the evidence-based literature review, solutions and recommendations associated with the identified clinical problem into one of three knowledge transfer mediums which will be further assessed (summative learning). The student can choose from one of three types of presentations; a visual poster, a written submission or a digital electronic presentation, following the available guidelines. Also the student is required to provide a written rationale as to why the medium had been chosen.
- The chosen medium is assessed against the marking criteria and feedback is provided from the lecturer marking team: the summative learning process.

Part three

- Part three of this powerful assessment showcases all of the students' visual, written and digital presentations at a public School of Nursing Evidence-based Practice Exhibition. The aim is to transfer this new knowledge to colleagues, peers, industry and the public to improve and sustain health care with new solutions to clinical problems.
- The students, plan, manage and organise the Evidence-based Practice Exhibition, invite and host the guests and are actively present at the exhibition to present their findings and talk with the guests (Figure 1).
- Further, the students' visual, written and digital presentations are accessible in the School of Nursing to display this knowledge as a learning resource and to inspire the BN year one and two students the learning that is achieved by the third year students (Figure 2). Equally, students are invited to publish their work in the School of Nursing Online Journal www.nursingjournal.org.nz. Access to these resources are also exhibited regionally by invitation from the Southern District Health Board with excellent feedback from industry.



Figure 1 Evidence-based Practice Exhibition 2017 Student Poster Display
Source: Published with permission from Sherry Lilley

Feedback from industry:

"I have just come back from Otago Poly where we looked over the posters the 3rd year students have done, wow there was some really good work. I think it is such a shame that it is not seen by a wider audience. Would you support a display in the main foyer of some of the posters? I can organise it with the [person's name removes] who happens to look after the foyer displays if you give your approval."

(Senior nurse Southern District Health Board, 2017)

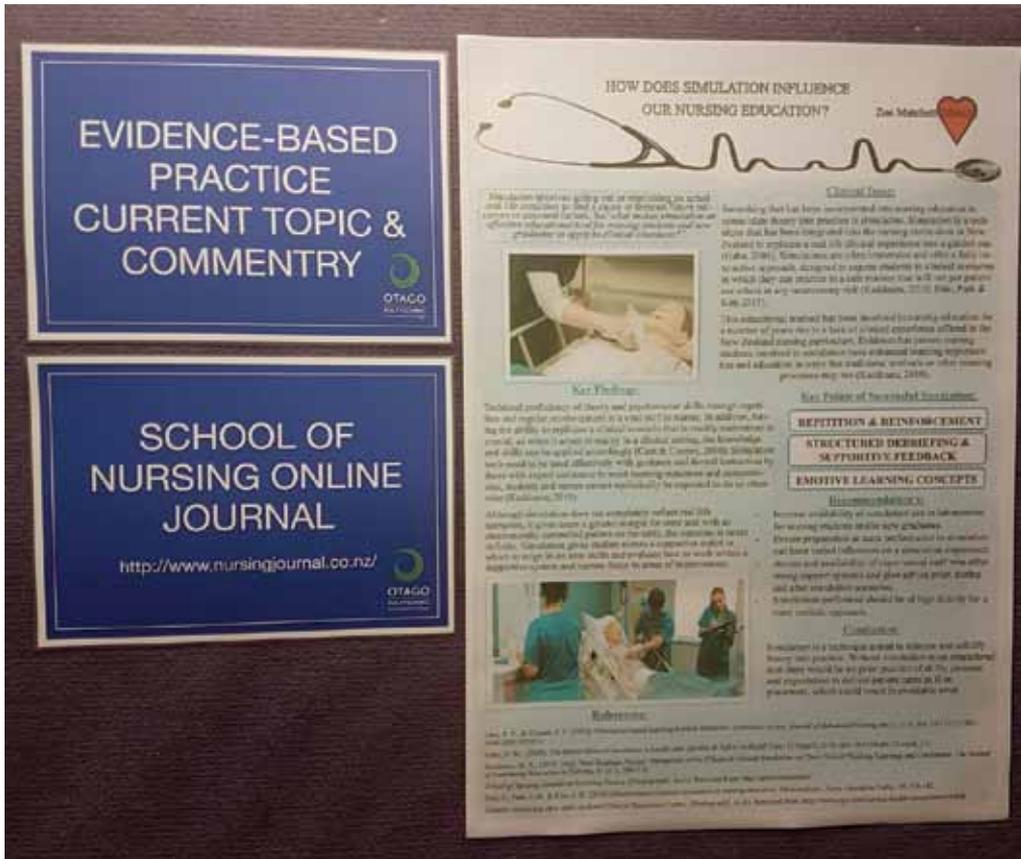


Figure 2 Continuation and promotion of student evidence-based practice current topic located in the School of Nursing
Source: Jean Ross

Feedback from students:

"Evidence-based research was a great fun to explore our interest and curiosity. Also it was brilliant to reformat the findings into another media (e.g. poster) to publish. It was excellent to have the forum [exhibition] day to show others what we did and what are the findings from our own research"

"having a physical poster that I used at interviews and letters from lecturer to acknowledge participation"

"How we got to research our own p[roblem, made me think of how research gathering is done methodically"

(Otago Polytechnic, 2017 Student Reflection on a Course (Full))

Evaluation of the powerful assessment

This powerful assessment is fit for purpose and demonstrates its fitness of purpose. The focus of the case study assessment offers formative and summative learning and extends this learning at an open presentation to colleagues and industry confirming that we are developing graduates who are not only going to be work ready for today but also work ready plus for tomorrow.

Assessment evaluates:

- students' critical reflection of clinical practice including the socio-political, cultural, ethical and legal influences on nursing practice leading to an identified clinical problem
- students' engagement and access and use of appropriate literature, national health related strategies and documents including the content of previous BN courses including theory, scientific information, evidence-based literature and research
- students' information literacy skills as they critically appraise the appropriate literature to inform their understanding of the problem in context
- students' rationale for presenting the evidence either through the medium of a poster, a digital display presentation (Figure 3) or a submission to present the clinical problem, the recommendations for the implementation of evidence-based changes aligned with a particular context and population group
- students' commitment to organise and attend the Evidence-based Practice Exhibition and be available to lecturers, colleagues, industry and the public to discuss the clinical problem and the best evidence-based solutions.



Figure 3 Evidence-based Practice Exhibition 2017 Student Digital Display
Source: Published with permission from Sherry Lilley

WHY

Evidence-based literature and research informs clinical nursing practice which improves the health care of the people of Aotearoa, New Zealand. The rationale as to why this powerful assessment has been developed and incorporated as a component of the year three BN programme is used for learning, career development, which informs local, regional and national nursing practice through local exhibitions and online publications. The assessment is real-world/authentic focused and invites students to critically reflect on clinical practice and to identify issues of concern. This assessment integrates evidence in practice while concurrently informing evidence of practice.

CONCLUSION

This case study assessment presented how best to equip the BN graduates to contribute to the profession of nursing and improve the health care sector and the provision of care for the people of Aotearoa, New Zealand. This case study assessment is based on real clinical problems in which students' develop creative, dynamic and integrated evidence-based solutions demonstrating its fitness of purpose: The assessment attracts high levels of positive feedback from students and industry at the dynamic exhibition in which multiple domains of learning are encouraged including digitally. This case study assessment prepares students to be work ready and further unable them to contribute to the growing evidence-based health care landscape as well as contributing to the knowledge generation of the nursing profession.

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