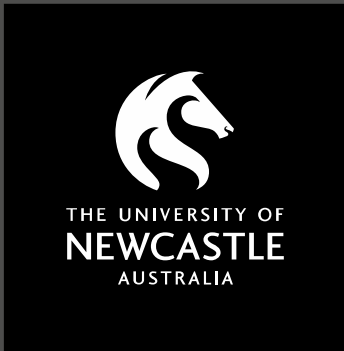


A REVIEW OF STUDENTS' EXPERIENCE OF GROUP WORK IN A PRE NURSING PROGRAM



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OVERVIEW

Program context and background

Open Foundation

Research Design and what we did

Findings

Outcomes

Conclusion

Questions

CONTEXT:

OPEN FOUNDATION

Provides qualification to apply to gain entry into higher education:

- Many students come from equity backgrounds
- Provides opportunity to develop skills for university study

Focus is on the 'Science for Nursing and Midwifery' course which is one of the largest courses with over 800 enrolments annually.

WHY UNDERTAKE THIS RESEARCH?

Research shows us:

- Confidence as a learner can initially be low
- Success in first assessment helps establish learner identity (Debenham & May, 2005)

We're focusing on:

- Seeking to understand the development of and transition to a student identity
- Support adult learners with academic, social and cultural barriers

WHAT WE DID:

PILOT STUDY

In 2015 we developed and ran an initial workshop:

- Used SPARK (Self and Peer Assessment Resource Kit) to help develop students' reflective skills

Outcome:

- Helped provide information on how students' engagement with group work.
- Provided social context and connections to their student identity.
- Formed the foundation for our following study.

CURRENT STUDY: **MORE INDEPTH ANALYSIS**

From our pilot study we narrowed our focus to investigate how group work can nurture the development of the student identity.

Aim:

to evaluate the effectiveness of one teaching strategy to support Open Foundation students transition into a student identity.

Objective:

to understand how to best support Open Foundation students to transition into a student role, that is, to feel connected to their program, to build self reflection, and to work collaboratively.

WHAT WE DID:

SURVEY IMPLEMENTATION

Survey applied that entailed mixed methods:

Part 1: quantitative statistics and Part 2: qualitative responses.

A thematic analysis was undertaken from the results.

Pre Group work, semester 1 week 3:

Workshop delivered. Students surveyed at end of this workshop and prior to commencement of group work.

Post group work, semester 1 week 6:

Students surveyed after completion of group work for 'Science for Nursing and Midwifery' in Week 6

PART 1 FINDINGS:

WHO WE SURVEYED

Age	n (pre survey)	n (post survey)
<20yrs	25	23
21-25yrs	76	39
26-30yrs	26	18
31-40yrs	26	25
41-50 yrs	17	16
>51yrs	2	3
TOTAL	172	124

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PART 1 FINDINGS:

SURVEY RESPONSES

	Pre group work survey				Post group work survey			
	A/SA* (%)	U (%)	D/SD (%)	Mean	A/SA* (%)	U (%)	D/SD (%)	Mean
Socially beneficial	81	17	2	4.01	78	15	8	3.91
Engage me in learning	81	16	3	4.09	76	18	6	3.90
Improve my self confidence	72	23	5	3.92	65	20	14	3.62
Helpful to my learning	86	10	5	4.11	69	20	10	3.90
Enable me to learn from others	91	7	2	4.28	77	14	9	3.90

* A/SA = Agree/Strongly Agree; U= uncertain; D/SD = Disagree/Strongly Disagree

Some percentages do not add up to 100% because there were missing responses for some questions.

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PART 2 FINDINGS:

THEMATIC THEMES

Age variation

Students under 25 years and younger enjoyed group work the most, those over 41 years enjoyed it the least.

Self confidence

Analysis indicated that the group work improved students confidence.

Becoming engaged in learning

That they become more engaged in their course work.

Learning from others

That they valued the opportunity to learn from others.

PART 2 FINDINGS:

BENEFITS OF GROUP WORK

Diversity of approaches to study

'Having people who think differently and have different skills bounce off ideas from each other';

Social consecutiveness

'making new friends at the start of the course'

Preparedness for study

'group learning has helped me to learn the content'

Leadership and collaboration

'study partners' and 'confidence to step up.'

PART 2 FINDINGS:

DIFFICULTIES OF GROUP WORK

Time management

'getting together to meet with everyone busy schedules';

Ongoing commitment

'Our group reduced significantly so the workload doubled for all of us, Also meetings were hard to organise due to time restraints';

Lack of equal contribution

'people not taking is seriously' : 'People dropping out of class' and; 'Not equal contribution'

OVERALL FINDINGS: WAS THE WORKSHOP BENEFICIAL?

44% agreed that the workshop increased their confidence

11% considered that the workshop did not enhance their confidence

28% considered that the workshop provided them with skills to manage possible challenges that can arise when working in groups

‘was clearly written what was expected’ and ‘It helped to engage with students and allocate tasks’

OVERALL FINDINGS: WAS SPARK BENEFICIAL?

60% students found SPARK beneficial

- Provided an opportunity to enhance their learning and reflective skills
- Enabled students to analysis all group members contributions to group work
- Provided 'individual' group mark for each student

There was a correlation between those who didn't like SPARK and those who struggled with their group work task.

'able to express concerns of group members'; their input' ; 'you wanted to do a good job, so your group got good marks as well', and; Able to express my thoughts.

CONCLUSION:

TEACHING STRATEGY

In combination, the workshop and the following coursework demonstrated a beneficial teaching strategy. This strategy was:

- multi layered with a focus on curricula and co-curricula needs
- Addressed the needs of mature-aged students returning to study and;
- Focused on providing a framework for students engaging in group work

CONCLUSION:

STUDENT BENEFIT

The implementation of this teaching strategy early in first semester allowed students to:

- Form social connections
- Provide an avenue to connect with other students early in their course and encourage peer learning
- Provide opportunity for development of the student identity and enhance their persistence with their studies
- Reduced anxiety by allowing students to use life skills and provide students' with conflict resolution skills
- Help student to develop self reflective skill though an online assessment (SPARK)

QUESTIONS?

