FIRST SHOT

ABSTRACT
Students play one of a range of key stakeholder roles. The role-based e-sim enables students to demonstrate understanding of the role of the Registered Midwife in the immunization debate

KEYWORDS   Immunization, midwife

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DESCRIPTION

There has been a recent Australian Federal Election and there is now a new Minister for Health. During the election he had been canvassed by some concerned parents and had made an election promise to hold a summit of interested stakeholders to discuss his idea of making the immunization schedule mandatory for all Australian Infants. There were five roles played by students representing key stakeholder positions: pro-immunization, anti-immunization, pro-choice and natural alternatives to immunization.

AUDIENCE/GROUP SIZE

- 20 students (one tutorial group) with each group of 3 or 4 sharing a role
- Undergraduate 3rd year midwifery students
- Can be adapted and used in any setting, course or group size

LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES

The learning objectives of the role-play were to primarily focus on students acquiring an understanding of primary health care principles and the role of the Registered Midwife in the infant immunization debate. Secondary learning objectives were to give students practice in negotiating and debating an issue with each other, in order to foster the group work and communication skills required for effective participation as a member of a health care team. Students engage in the following activities: communication; collaboration; negotiation; group skills; team work; research into the pros and cons of immunization.

TIME AND SETTING

The role-play itself consisted of an asynchronous online discussion which took place over a period of 10 days in October 2010. Key stakeholders were invited to a 'virtual summit' which allowed them to contribute to the summit wherever they were in Australia. Over the course of the role-play (10 days) each group of students playing a role, made several posts to the 'virtual summit.' Just as would occur in reality stakeholders met behind the scenes to discuss what was being "said" at the summit and to prepare a response for their character. On campus students usually met face-to-face and distance students chose to communicate using a range of electronic media including email, Skype, Microsoft Social Networking (MSN), Face book, Twitter etc.

RESOURCES

Overview of resources supporting the role play:
- Website
- Instructions on LMS before students enter role-play
- Needs minimal if any IT support
- The pros and cons of infant immunization are often debated in the press and media and it was therefore relatively easy to source a range of items both print and video, to supplement and build the background story and triggers.

ASSESSMENT

Debriefing and assessment occurred contemporaneously. This occurred face-to-face in the week following its completion. All students were asked to reflect on what happened in the role-play, especially from the perspective of communication. They were asked to comment on:
- those aspects of communication within the group that were effective
- those aspects of communication that were less effective and why
- strategies that could be used to improve communication effectiveness in the future.

This tutorial also provided an opportunity for all students to present their persona's view on mandatory immunization, to all other students. This presentation consisted of their "persona's" submission to the virtual summit. The submission included their persona's views, with evidence, as to whether or not the Minister should support a bill for compulsory immunization. This was the summative (graded) assessment weighted at 30% of the final grade for this learning activity.

FACILITATOR ISSUES

Facilitate discussion; judge the "winner" of the debate

REUSABILITY

This role-play was already been adapted from the "Much ado about the flu" role-play". The design was equally effective in a very small group of students.

REFERENCES AND LINKS

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