

Using Synchronous and Asynchronous Lessons for Nursing Education during COVID-19 Pandemic

Uso de lecciones sincrónicas y asincrónicas para la educación de enfermería durante la pandemia de COVID-19

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Dear Editor:

The Coronavirus pandemic has created an initial suspension of academic activities due to the need for social isolation and quarantine. This substantial negative impact was rapidly realized by the universities bodies who responded to resume the classes adopting different modalities of training.

Nursing schools across the globe have replaced in-person theoretical and practical teaching with online alternatives. However, many educators, familiar with face to face the classic model of training, had doubts about the effectiveness of technology in teaching and learning in nursing and healthcare complex subjects. Regardless the current availability of resources and tools that allow a cutting edge methodology, there was no vast experience to ensure success, nor did they have guarantee widespread access by the students to a computer and internet.⁽¹⁾

This article details how the students from a Portuguese Nursing Scholl actively engaged in an online approach during the COVID-19 pandemic. The speed of implementation of these changes caused a particular concern if the acceptance, success and engagement of the undergraduates would be affirmative when resuming the theoretical classes.

In the Pathology Module of the Nursing Degree Course, which already applied pedagogical innovations,⁽²⁾ a blended approach using synchronous and asynchronous interactions was used, as recommended for other authors.⁽³⁾ Online classes took place over three months in blocks of 3 hours using synchronous live

webinar via a cloud-based video conferencing service. This method permitted the interaction between students and lecturers to enhance engagement and had an average of 90 people simultaneously.

On the other hand, some classes were delivered using asynchronous mode (voice record PowerPoint presentations available via the learning online platform Moodle©), to enable autonomy and flexibility, avoiding a potential scheduling conflict with familiar/professional commitments due to the lockdown or in case of technical difficulties. Moreover, it allowed the students to review the content and reinforce their studies.

At the end of the Module, the students' evaluation of the quality of teaching and the learning experience was good. Concerning online classes, they attributed an equal level of assimilation of knowledge compared to face-to-face classes. Students' comments on both methods included: "the live session allows questions to be clarified in real-time" and "the record is possible to follow at my own pace and revised". Students' feedback also indicates increased free time and comfort, with a more flexible timetable, which boosted participation and attention. In contrast, some disadvantages were identified, such as technical failures and less interaction.

In summary, the change in the methodology, even under pressure for immediate implementation, was very enriching. It did not have a detrimental effect on the teaching and learning, as it was positive in many aspects. Based on students' statements, improving the network conditions and deepening the motivation for interaction, eventually with greater dynamism of the classes, we will have evolved into a highly promising teaching paradigm and adapted to new realities and needs.

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Conflict of interests

Los autores declaran no tener conflicto de intereses.