

3C A Pre-Entry Distance Course on Moodle: articulating course expectations, aiming to impact on access, and student confidence

Presenters: Chris Finlay and Mary McVey, Life Sciences, Beth Paschke, Chemistry, Catriona Simpson, Laura Carmichael and Hazel Hamilton, Nursing and Health Care

Co-authors: Graham MacIntosh, Medicine, Leoni DeWert, Life Sciences

During 2013-14 the five authors developed an accessible, flexible model for online delivery and learning within Moodle, a 6-week course called Pre-Entry Nursing Summer School (PENSs). This course was developed in response to a recognised barrier to potential nursing students. If potential nursing students need to update their biology and chemistry knowledge they must attend a 6-week on-campus summer school as part of their condition of entry. This immediately creates financial and timing pressures that may prevent students from choosing the University of Glasgow course.

There is a lot of untapped potential for pre-entry engagement with students prior to them starting their undergraduate studies. With careful thought and design this interaction can be used to ease the transition to HE, a known difficulty for many students (Thomas, L, 2012). This staff and student contact can benefit everyone involved and pre-entry courses like this could also be used to promote courses and help attract students to the University.

The PENSs course is an on-line alternative delivering nursing focused content, unlike the on-campus summer school, that is accessible by enrolled students anywhere in the world. The course allowed students to experience University level teaching and assessment methods. In addition the course structure and content aimed to articulate the expectations placed on first year students helping to highlight the reality of transition into Higher Education.

In this initial pilot 6 students enrolled onto the course. Evaluation questionnaires were collected from these participants before, during and after the course, investigating aspects of accessibility, student confidence and awareness.

This presentation will:

- Outline the developmental work and delivery methods used in the PENSs course;
- Report the student evaluation results, assessing any changes in student confidence and awareness;
- Discuss course design, scalability and expansion for future years

This information will focus on key points useful to anyone considering designing online distance materials.

References

Thomas, L, 2012, Building student engagement and belonging in High Education at a time of change: final report from the What Works? Student Retention & Success programme. Available at: https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/What_works_final_report.pdf [accessed 24th October 2014]

