

Poster presentation

Debating pain: A collaborative online group activity

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This poster reports on an action research project investigating the development and implementation of an online debate activity in a core unit of study within the Graduate Studies in Pain Management Program. The activity required that students work in groups to debate the topic 'pain is merely a symptom, not a disease'. It aimed to encourage critical engagement with a contemporary pain management issue, promote collaborative learning in an online context, and provide opportunities for reflection on the benefits and challenges of the group process. Learning design considerations included the: timing and focus of the activity in the curriculum; structure and sequencing of tasks; scaffolds and learning supports required; and student readiness. Initial findings highlighted the engaging and enjoyable nature of the task. Students reported the activity encouraged adoption of a more critical stance towards the course content and provided them with a valuable and worthwhile learning experience. They also commented that the cross-disciplinary discussion enriched learning and enabled new insights into the management of pain. From a teacher perspective the activity reinforced the importance of providing enough structure and appropriate learning supports to assist learners collaborate effectively in the online environment and achieve a specific group task.

Keywords: online learning, collaborative learning, online debate, pain management

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