Title of Project | Interdisciplinary Distance Education to Support Student Learning During International Electives
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Lead Department | King’s Centre for Global Health
Other contributors/Departments | School of Medicine, School of Nursing

PROJECT DETAILED

**Outputs:** What has been produced thus far?

Our project has progressed according to plan thus far. Our efforts in the first half of the project have been focused on conducting a comprehensive needs assessment of student learning while on electives in LMIC, and on developing an educational strategy and materials for the pilot planned for 2013. In addition to the activities we have completes (described in the subsequent section) We have produced:

1) A report on student learning while on electives in LMIC based on a qualitative analysis of student log reports.
2) A quantitative evaluation tool for assessing student learning outcomes about Global Health
3) A quantitative report of student learning about global health during electives in LMIC
4) A Global Health competency framework
5) A preliminary program plan for an online education program during electives, including learning objectives, materials and process of online support.

**Outcomes/Impact:** To what extent are you achieving the original aims of the project? Please include examples where possible.

The aims/ objectives of our project are to:

- Identify students’ educational needs, priorities and perspectives
- Collate student needs and existing competency frameworks to identify learning outcomes
- Develop, introduce and evaluate teaching materials, critical reflection and peer-to-peer learning to deliver these outcomes.
- Offer a continuous learning experience that links pre-elective preparation, in-country support and post-trip follow-up.
- Pilot social support and opportunities for socially mediated learning through an active online global health community.

Our project has thus far progressed according to our initial proposal (timeline for project progress below). We have conducted a comprehensive needs assessment of student learning while on electives in LMIC and we are on track to pilot this program with nursing and medical students in 2013.

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The first 6 months of our project has been primarily devoted to a comprehensive needs assessment to understand the educational experience of students on electives. We have conducted a series of longitudinal interviews with students, collected and analysed 'electives diaries', and assessed student learning outcomes.

Activities completed:
- Longitudinal interviews:
  - 4 student researchers (all from the KCL SOM) hired and trained.
  - Pre-departure interviews: Interviews conducted and transcribed (n=10)
Return interviews: interviews conducted and transcribed (n=10)

Preliminary analysis of interview findings

Electives diaries:

- Students participants recruited, diaries collected
- Qualitative analysis of diaries

Evaluation of global health learning outcomes

- Evaluation tool developed based on global health competency framework
- Elective poster presentations for students on elective in LMIC assessed for global health learning (n=48)
- Data quantitatively analysed

Planned activities:

- 6-month follow-up interview (to be competed in March 2013)
- Interviews analysis completed and written up for publication

The next phase of our project (Jan-Sept 2013) will involve developing and piloting a new distance education program to support student learning while on electives. Findings from the needs assessment indicate that students have ample experiences for learning for being immersed in new clinical environments and having increased clinical responsibility. However, students have little opportunity for to reflect on and analyse their experiences. Thus, we plan to use Kolb’s theory of learning to develop a distance education program that will introduce reflection and critical analysis upon the concrete experience that students are having on electives in order to improve learning outcomes. We have already begun work towards this, and will continue into the spring.

Activities completed:

- Global health competency framework developed based on literature review and consultation with global health education practitioners.
- Preliminary plan for educational program developed.
- Collaborating with Kinship (through Bernadette John), in order to use the new King’s social as a learning platform.

Activities planned

- Pilot program with Nursing students (March 2013)
- Pilot program with Medicine students (July 2013)
- Evaluate outcomes from the pilot programs
**Supportive factors:** What are the main factors that are contributing to the successful progress of the project?

We have had excellent support from our partners in the School of Medicine electives committee, the nursing electives education leads and the King’s Center for Global Health. As well we have been collaborating with Bernadette John, the founder of the king’s Kinship program to develop functionality that will be needed to support collaborative online learning for students.

Additionally we have had a dedicated and helpful group of student research assistants who have conducted and transcribed interviews.

**Challenges:** Have you experienced any barriers or challenges in developing your project? What could be done to support innovation in the curriculum?

The only challenge has been that due to scheduling conflicts it has become apparent that we will need conduct separate pilots with nursing and medicine student. Initially, we had hoped to have both nursing and medicine students in the same pilot initiative.

**Recommendations:** Based on your projects, what recommendations would you make for improving the curriculum and student experience generally? Are there any wider implications of your project for the College/University undergraduate and/or postgraduate curriculum? In particular what would be the implications of introducing your innovation on a large scale across a range of disciplines?

Each year, over 200 KLCL students in Medicine and Nursing participate in international electives in low and middle income countries (LMIC). From our needs assessment (student interviews, elective diaries, learning outcomes assessment), we have determined that electives offer opportunities to learn new skills (eg: clinical or research), new knowledge (eg: theories of development) and new attitudes (eg: cultural awareness) and to engage with ethical issues that will impact on future professional practice. Student have reported extensive experiences for learning, but inadequate opportunities for reflection and integration of theory with experience. We thus are working to develop an online learning program that will introduction structured opportunities for reflection on the elective experience during and after the elective. The program will be based on Kolb’s theory of Experiential Learning, and facilitate students in synthesize the real life experiences they are having on electives with theoretical frameworks in order to promote deeper understanding. We are on track to pilot this program with nursing and medical students in 2013.

Our project is specifically intended to support the 200 Medical and Nursing students who go on electives in LMICs each year. From the initial findings from our needs assessment, we hypothesize that ALL students on educational electives could benefit from an online program to introduce reflection and critical analysis into their experiential learning. The Elective Education Committee lead has also expressed interest in developing an online program that would be intended for all students, including those in LMICs, other high income countries and within the UK. However, we feel that a needs assessment, aimed at a broader group of elective students will be needed before an educational program for all elective students is implemented.
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<th>Dissemination: Has the project been shared with colleagues within and beyond the institution yet? What are you plans to do so?</th>
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<td>We are in regular communication with: The School of Medicine Electives Committee; The School of Nursing electives leads; The King's Centre for Global Health. Additionally we have presented this project at the electives education meeting, and the Global Health core meetings.</td>
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<td>We are also planning to disseminate our findings outside of KCL. Preliminary findings from the needs assessment will be presented at the Consortium of Universities for Global Health 2013 conference (March, 2013). We are also looking at other venues for disseminations, such as the Association for Medical Education in Europe annual meeting.</td>
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