

Using SMS to support reflective practice among health professional students on placement in an Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health context



Tim Barlott
Kirsty Jackson
Jannah Rulfs



Alison Nelson
Renee Brown

Reflective Practice & Developing Cultural Responsiveness

- **Reflective practice is an important skill for health professional students, particularly in culturally diverse settings**
 - Professional reasoning (Karvonen et al., 2017)
 - Professional identity (Grant et al., 2017)
 - Cultural responsiveness (Nelson et al., 2017)
- **Reflective practice is best developed through personal experience in a supportive practice environment** (Wong et al., 2016)
- **Challenges:**
 - Diverse locations
 - Diverse schedules
 - Lack of standard reflective process

SMS for Student Engagement

- Information and Communication Technology (ICT) has potential for engaging university students in guided reflection (Fisher & Baird, 2006; Goh, Seet, & Chen, 2012)
- SMS
 - Personal & discrete; immediate notification; relatively inexpensive
 - 99% of SMS are read, 90% of those are read within one minute
- Found to promote, encourage, and compliment learning (Goh, Seet, & Chen, 2012) and encourage student reflection (Tabuenca et al., 2014)
- Lack of literature on use of SMS for reflective practice for health students on placement

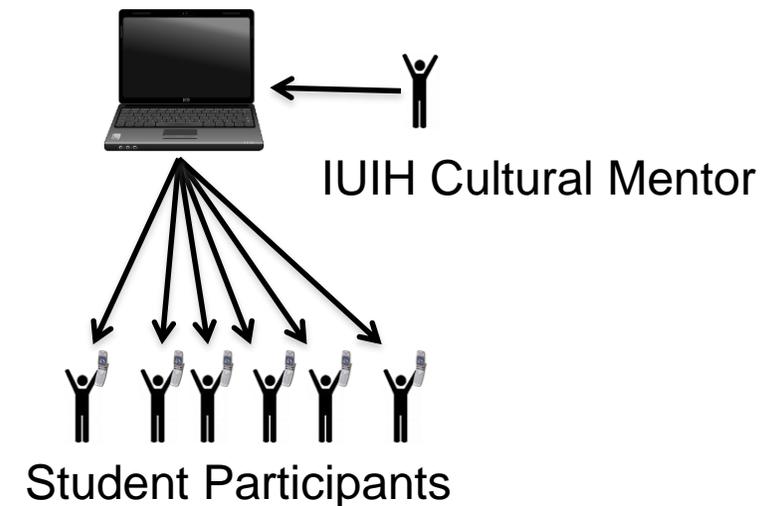
Partnership & Project Aims

- Community-based participatory research approach
- Project aim:

To develop and evaluate the use of SMS as a tool for encouraging reflective practice and reflective dialogue among health professional students on placement in Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander health settings

Method & Participants

- **Four iterative action research cycles from 2015-2017**
 - 33 total student participants
- **Structured, guided reflection based on the Making Connections Framework**
 - 6 weeks, 3 messages per week – send by UIIH cultural mentor
- **Fourth cycle – student focus group**
 - Five student participants
- **Collaborative thematic analysis**



Findings & Discussion

1) Transition of SMS as a personal to a professional technology

- *SMS as a “chatty” technology*
- *Uncomfortable with using mobile phones on placement – “not wanting to appear unprofessional”*
- *Eventually they became more comfortable*

2) Benefits and limitations of the professional use of SMS

- + *accessibility, prompting nature, peer support*
- *lost track of messages in their notification feed if they don't engage immediately*



Findings & Discussion

3) SMS for reflective dialogue

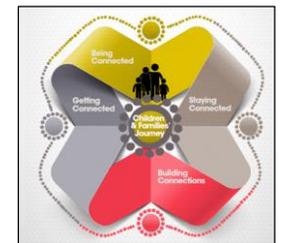
- *Group norms for participating in group dialogue – snowball effect*
- *Difficult to share a thoughtful response using a “chatty” technology*
- *Educator input encouraged reflective dialogue*



(TP Human Capital, 2016)

4) SMS and reflection on the Making Connections Framework

- *Messages prompted in the moment reflection*
- *Encouraged a deeper understanding of the Framework*



Implications for Practice Education

- **SMS was useful for encouraging reflective practice** – but important to facilitate the use of SMS as a professional tool
- **Build upon the strengths of SMS as a personal, “chatty” technology**
- **Personalised messaging increases student engagement**
- **Participate *with* students** – educators can model reflective practice
- **SMS is most suitable as a complimentary tool alongside face-to-face learning opportunities**

Contact Information

Tim Barlott

Associate Lecturer in Occupational Therapy
School of Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
University of Queensland
Email: t.barlott@uq.edu.au

Dr Alison Nelson

Director, Allied Health and Workforce Development
Institute for Urban Indigenous Health
Email: alison.nelson@iuih.org.au

