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

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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 IUIH 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

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

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