

Title of case study

Getting to know you: Dragons' Den as an Interprofessional Learning activity

Staff Lead

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School/ Department

School of Health Sciences

Faculty

Health and Life Sciences, Institute of Clinical Sciences

Name of course and module (if applicable) case study took place within

The activity sits within profession specific modules

Please briefly describe the activity undertaken for the case study

Designing appropriate interprofessional learning (IPL) activities for first year health science students can be challenging: many students are focused on their professional programme, wish to protect their professional identity, and there are vast differences in the students' clinical exposure. According to Bridges (2011), a successful IPL curriculum relies on opportunities for students to experience, share and practise a range of traits with each other, which within the School have been identified as communication, team-working, values and ethics and understanding roles and responsibilities of different professions; which is critical within a health care team. Furthermore when designing activities within IPL, student feedback is reflected upon and taken into account where possible. Evaluations have identified that activities must be interactive, engaging and enjoyable and avoid any repetition from content in profession specific programmes.

The aims of the IPL session were twofold:

- To provide a learning opportunity for all health science students to learn with, from and about each other through mixed group activities.
- To promote their own professions whilst at the same time appreciating others and recognising similar core values in practices.

Within the School of Health Sciences there are six health professional programmes; nursing (58), diagnostic (49) and therapeutic radiography (32 UG and 22 PG Dip), occupational therapy (50), orthoptics (38) and physiotherapy (56), totalling 305 students.

The Dragons' Den is a recent development within the IPL programme of activities and this formed the second part of the IPL session. There is no common IPL assessment in the first year but specific programmes may embed some of the material covered within their modules.

How was the activity implemented?

The whole cohort of students was split into eight groups comprising different professions in each group, albeit of different sizes, determined by room allocation and capacity but in numbers ranging from mid-twenties to forty. Each of the eight groups was facilitated by two health science academic staff of different professions to enhance the interprofessional approach. The groups were further divided into mixed small groups on arrival at the session, ensuring representation of each profession. The first activity comprised an interprofessional activity where the groups had to develop a word cloud using an online word cloud tool to identify the qualities and characteristics required of an effective and competent health practitioner, reinforcing the traits of team-working, values and ethics and communication.

For the Dragons' Den activity in the second part of the session students were required to work in their own professional groups. The remit was to produce an innovative marketing strategy using a poster with art work for visual impact, along with a strap line, as part of a sales pitch for their own profession in forty minutes. Six dragons represented each profession. Once the time had elapsed the students took it in turns to pitch their profession to the dragons for five minutes, followed by five minutes for questions posed by the dragons. They had two minutes to confer and answer these questions.

The idea was to vote for the best presentation in relation to:

- Communication – how clear was the pitch? Did it make sense?
- Competence in relation to the pitchers with regard to selling/promoting their profession.
- Whether they felt the pitchers could be trusted.

However, the idea of voting was not well received by many students and facilitators took the decision not to complete this part of the activity to avoid any friction.

Has this activity improved programme provision and student experience, if so how?

The health programmes are regulated by regulatory bodies; the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) and the Health and Care Professions Council (HCPC) and both require the inclusion of interprofessional education/ learning opportunities.

The students' experience of IPL was evaluated using "WeLearn Interprofessional (IP) Programme Assessment" a validated instrument devised by MacDonald et al 2009 (nexusipe.org). The form was modified to ensure that it was relevant to the nature of the IPL session and thus only 15 items were included instead of 30.

The Likert scale results (on a scale of 1-5 with 1 meaning strongly disagree and 5 being strongly agree) identified the following:

- The learning experience provided opportunities to learn about each other's professions - 4.75

- The learning experience provided opportunities to learn with and from each other - 4.3
- The learning activities promoted mutual respect and respect among learners - 3.8
- The learning activities contributed to achieving the learning objectives - 4.0
- The learning activities were well organised - 4.75
- The learning activities were engaging - 4.75
- We feel motivated towards adopting a more interprofessional approach to our learning - 4.0
- We enjoyed the learning experience - 3.8

The free texts relating specifically to the Dragons' Den activity were mainly positive:

Positive comments

- Interesting to evaluate own profession and hear about others
- Engaging
- Fun
- Good to have the power to ask questions
- Learnt a lot about each profession
- Creative way of expressing our views and presenting
- Educational
- Insightful
- Interesting

Non-positive comments

- Could have been given more goals for pitches
- Everyone should be able to ask questions and not limit to the dragons
- Did not bring teams together – should be more encouraging apart from trying to “out do” each other
- A bit short of people so difficult to produce a pitch in the time allocated

Did you experience any challenges in implementation, if so how did you overcome these?

Upfront, there were no known challenges about the actual Dragons' Den, just the logistical problems of rooms and group sizes.

The students were notified of the nature of the IPL session on VITAL where they were advised to familiarise themselves with the Dragons' Den concept by watching an episode on BBCiplayer and informed that they would have to design a poster in groups and present back to the rest of the group. Facilitators were given the material in advance of the session and therefore had opportunities to contact the lead. It was not until the session was underway, that the facilitators felt that ranking added extra anxieties for the students which made them feel uncomfortable so this aspect of the interaction was withdrawn.

Which Liverpool University Hallmarks and Attributes does this case study relate to (tick all boxes that apply)

Research-connected Teaching X
Active Learning X
Authentic Assessment
Confidence X
Digital Fluency
Global Citizenship

How does this case study relate to the Hallmarks and Attributes you have selected?

Research-connected Teaching

The teaching approach and evaluation adopted are informed by an evidence-based approach to inter-professional learning.

Active Learning

The case study is primarily centred on active learning with the students taking responsibility for their learning through communicating with others and finding out about each other's professions and having the opportunity to develop their team working skills.

Confidence

Through the presentations, students have been provided with an opportunity to improve their presentation skills and increase their confidence in speaking up in front of others with whom they may not be familiar.

How could this case study be transferred to other disciplines?

Dragons' Den traditionally involves pitching for money for an enterprise and in recent years has been used in education to improve the business acumen of students, develop employability skills and provide students with experience of bidding for health care innovations and research monies. In the context of IPL literature, this appears to be an innovative approach for students to learn with, from and about each other's professions.

Brooke et al. (2010) used the Dragons' Den to assess the business acumen necessary to rescue an imaginary veterinary practice from failure where the students were required to analyse the current performance of a fictitious practice and, through consideration of their strategy and financial forecasts, propose funding for the newly acquired business and decide on whether the practice should continue as a mixed practice or sell part of it to focus on small animal work. The proposal had to withstand ten minutes of questions posed by dragons with experience in the veterinary profession, financial consultancy and management and marketing. Here, it was viewed positively claiming it was "really good fun; gave me good insight into running of a veterinary practice; put everything we learnt into play".

The concept of Dragons' Den was utilised to develop employability by Fitzgerald et al. (2010) with final year Biomedical Science undergraduates where students worked in small groups and were responsible for the development of a biotechnology product from the science through to marketing and finance. Each group member was assigned a specific role to address all aspects of the development and after eight weeks presented their product to a Dragons' Den type panel. The requests to the Dragons' Den varied from asking for money for further development to selling the product. This activity was assessed with the presentation contributing to 40% of the module and the group peer-assessed each other's contributions for improved equity in the assessment process. The feedback was mixed: positive feedback related to the engagement of the students in developing and demonstrating employability skills and most students enjoyed the experience. Negative feedback was received for the group work and peer assessment marks which were significant in determining their marks in the final year.

More recently, Vyas et al. (2017) provided an opportunity for medical students to develop a business case through a public health Dragons' Den which was assessed formatively. Students were required to identify and quantify a public health initiative after ascertaining basic demographic and epidemiological data to describe the general health and social profile of their chosen area and to pitch their proposal for financial support. The students evaluated the sessions highly (4.2 on the Likert scale) and recognised the value of the exercise in terms of contextualising patient knowledge in terms of population health.

The concept of Dragons' Den could be applied across the University to promote inter-professional/ disciplinary working in a range of years of study. Areas could include:

- Urban planning; engineering; architecture; environmental sciences.

If someone else were to implement the activity within your case study what advice would you give them?

- Provide more information to the students that Dragons' Den is a competitive environment and to see this as something positive rather than negative.
- Perhaps have a debrief with the students after the end of the Dragons' Den.
- Instruct the facilitators to adhere to the plan and tasks so all students experience a similar IPL.

References

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