

SHOW AND TELL

Raising student awareness of disability and diversity through an assessed conference organisation activity in final year Healthcare Science programmes

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Introduction

This contribution presents an example of a group-based assessment conducted within the context of learning about neurological disorders and disabilities. A final year unit, Neurological Disorders and Disabilities (6ABL3306), delivered in the School of Healthcare Science includes a coursework activity worth 10% of the unit mark in which students organise two-hour mini-conferences / seminars. During the mini-conferences each student gives a 5-6 minute presentation about a published research paper on a topic relevant to the unit aims. The aims of the activity are:

- To give students experience of collaborating and providing peer support through the organisation, in small groups, of a student-led mini-conference.
- To develop their knowledge of published research in neurological disorders and disabilities through the individual delivery of short (5-6 minute) student research presentations.

Pre-conference instructions

- Students are divided into groups of about 10 (4-5 groups are usually needed) and asked to select one from a list of 10-12 topics relating to the unit content (e.g. Alzheimer's, autism, chronic fatigue, cretinism, depression, fibromyalgia, Down's syndrome, Huntington's, multiple sclerosis, Parkinson's, chronic pain, schizophrenia, stroke).
- Students are asked to organise their own conference, including allocating topics within their group, organising the order of the talks and arranging group planning / practice sessions.
- Students are asked to present their research papers using a standard six-slide format that sets out the presentation title and study aims, background, study methods, results, and conclusions.
- Conference presentations are copied to the classroom computer before the start and the conference is opened by a student who introduces the first speaker.
- After each presentation students are expected to answer questions from other students, in a mutually supportive environment, and then to introduce the next speaker.

Assessment and feedback

- Each student submits a PowerPoint handout of their talk and a copy of the research paper.
- Each talk is assessed using a proforma which has 10 criteria, each marked out of 10. These include explanation of aims, background, study method, results, and conclusions, as well as clarity of slides, presentation style, use of PowerPoint, organisation / teamwork, and time penalties where appropriate.
- Students are given a copy of their assessment proforma and PowerPoint handout with comments about each aspect of their presentation and their overall mark.

- Three cohorts of students have undertaken this activity with the following marks:

	Mean (%)	Range (%)	Number
Cohort 1	66	40-84	31
Cohort 2	62	35-78	53
Cohort 3	65	35-75	54

- Students demonstrate enthusiasm for this activity and there is good evidence of students working effectively in teams.

Disability and diversity awareness

Through undertaking this assignment activity the students also gain valuable insight into, and further understanding of, a range of equality and diversity issues associated with the neurological disorders and disabilities that are discussed in their oral presentations. This enhanced awareness also encourages greater tolerance and peer support while working collaboratively as a team.

Talks Mark Sheet (CW-3)

Unit Title: Neurological Disorders and Disabilities													
Unit: 6ABL3306													
Student Name:													
Date of Talk:				Assessor:				Handout : Y / N (for marking)		1st page of Paper: Y / N			
Prescribed time of Talk: 5 - 6 minutes				Actual time:				PowerPoint used: Y / N		Animation used: Y / N			
Title of Talk: (Topic of Research Paper)													
Marking Guide	F	F	F	F	3 rd	2ii	2i	1 st	1 st	1 st	1 st	Comments	
Slide 1: Title, full reference & aims	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Slide 2: Background information	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Slide 3: Study Methods	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Slide 4: Results (1)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Slide 5: Results (2)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Slide 6: Discussion & Conclusion	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Clarity of Slides (font size, images)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Quality of talk style (avoid reading)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Use of PowerPoint (animation etc)	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Group Organisation Mark	0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10		
Time penalty (relative to prescribed length)	1 mark deducted for every 20 seconds outside prescribed time												
Overall Mark (%):	Grade:			F	3 rd	2ii	2i	1 st					Tutor: