



ENHANCING AN ACTIVE LEARNING ENVIRONMENT

A Case Study Inspiring Different Types of Interactivity

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CHALLENGE

Commissioned by the Department of Health, Social Services and Public Safety, the N. Ireland, Centre for Pharmacy Learning and Development (NICPLD) provides postgraduate education and learning opportunities for pharmacists and pharmacy support staff via a range of learning methods including live workshops and distance learning methods. NICPLD also provides interprofessional learning programmes for GPs, nurses and other allied health professionals. The Centre continually strives to enhance the active learning methods integrated into the live workshop programme.

SOLUTION

The Centre was first introduced to TurningPoint having seen it showcased during events at Queen's University. NICPLD trialed TurningPoint within their workshops to determine its applicability to their setting. Having seen that TurningPoint could further enhance learner engagement, NICPLD invested in their own sets of ResponseCards.

NICPLD workshops would always have included some degree of interactivity, for example, video input, a guest patient representative or case studies. Dr Bell explains that in addition to this, "We wanted the capacity to engage learners at random intervals throughout the course of a workshop to think about the topics being discussed at that particular period of time." She continues, "That for us was the real advantage of TurningPoint; that we could engage the learner at any point in time and it didn't necessarily mean people physically moving about the room to come together."

Today, the technology is routinely used during both uniprofessional and interprofessional workshops with trainees and experienced professionals to achieve a variety of educational outcomes. TurningPoint is used at the very start of workshops to establish participant's baseline knowledge in relation to the topics being discussed. Similarly it may be used at the end of a session to determine the extent of learning during the course of the workshop. Tutors will also use TurningPoint and the resulting interactivity to lead the learning by collectively working through examples together.

It is an ideal tool to allow participants to understand why some individuals choose one option over another and to examine in closer detail the professional decision making process. For example, the technology will often be used during sessions on ethical issues. Dr Bell explains, "It's a great way of asking participants, 'What would you do in this scenario?' and quite often we get a range of responses." The tutors would then probe the participants to understand how they have made that professional decision. Dr Bell continues, "It helps participants to realise that their individual views and ideas are not the only acceptable ones and gives an appreciation and understanding as to why peers may choose different courses of action within the professional practice environment."

TurningPoint is of particular use during interprofessional workshops where interactivity of the learner can be influenced, and sometimes limited, by perceived hierarchy of the professionals attending. The use of ResponseCards provides anonymity and ensures that everyone's view is equal thus overcoming this difficulty with the interprofessional learning environment.

CONCLUSION

Dr Bell discusses the effects of TurningPoint. "When we first introduced TurningPoint, we introduced it quite gradually and it has now become established as the norm. Participants come to our workshops and are familiar with the ResponseCards and how to use them. They enjoy the anonymity and the increased interactivity that the use of the technology brings to the workshops."

She continues, "From a user and an educator perspective, I'll admit that I initially had concerns that it would complicate workshop preparation and delivery for me, but it hasn't done so. I started with little templates that I set up and I now usually replicate these when including voting slides within a workshop. It's very easily done and is certainly no more complicated than using PowerPoint® on a day-to-day basis. The rewards that we're seeing from the user perspective is that it enhances their learning experience - that's exactly what we hoped to achieve!"

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