



Moving Beyond Lectures: Preparing Future-Ready Nurses through Innovative Workshop Approaches

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Abstract

This presentation investigates the impact of a student-centred workshop approach on student self-reported engagement, achievement of learning outcomes, and assessment performance within a core preregistration nursing module. Recognising the imperative for nurses to continually update their knowledge in an increasingly dynamic healthcare environment, this study shifts away from traditional didactic teaching methods that often hinder student engagement and the development of critical thinking skills.

The workshop-based approach to delivering essential module learning content incorporated diverse interactive elements, including small-group discussions, case scenarios, simulations, multimedia resources, educational games, and role-playing activities. These strategies were designed to engage students actively in the learning process. The findings reveal that students who participated in the workshop-based instructional method reported significantly higher engagement, satisfaction, and comprehension of fundamental concepts compared to their experiences in conventional lecture-based formats. Furthermore, students expressed that they exhibited improved critical thinking abilities and achieved self-identified superior performance on summative assessments.

These results underscore the significance of learner-centred methodologies, such as interactive workshops, in nursing higher education. Such pedagogical approaches foster essential lifelong learning competencies and enhance clinical aptitude, better equipping nurses to navigate the complexities of contemporary healthcare. By prioritising active learning and critical thinking, these innovative instructional strategies can profoundly improve student engagement, optimise achievement of learning outcomes, and contribute to developing a more skilled and adaptable nursing workforce.

Keywords: *Student-centred learning, workshop approach, engagement, critical thinking*

Introduction

Creating interactive educational sessions that foster students' independent curiosity and creativity remains a pressing concern for academics worldwide [1]. Nursing education focuses on achieving clinical competencies and educational growth by establishing appropriate pedagogical and psychosocial conditions that facilitate effective learning [2]. Educators strive to cultivate environments that enhance learner motivation, professional attitudes, and behaviours while also igniting interest in communication and the pursuit of knowledge and understanding [3]. This effort comes in the context of rising trends in student indifference and disengagement from academic pursuits [4]. Therefore, educators must strike a balance within the learning environment to address the evolving needs of learners while also nurturing essential academic skills, such as critical thinking [5,6]. Cognitive engagement in the learning process is vital and builds upon the foundations of passive, active, and interactive learning [7]. Consequently, developing educational strategies to enhance student engagement has become an increasingly important aspect of the academic landscape [8].

Nurses need to be prepared to operate in fast-paced and ever-evolving environments [9]. They must deepen their knowledge and understanding of nursing practice by broadening their learning beyond that provided with conventional teaching methodologies [10]. This includes utilising workshop approaches to deliver content within pre-registration nursing program learning at degree level in the United Kingdom. These methods capitalise on the expertise of academic instructors while actively engaging students in the learning process, thereby providing a structured avenue for acquiring knowledge, skills, and attitudes [11]. It has been highlighted that engaging learners with study materials, utilising group learning and facilitating learning moves away from the didactic learning approaches adopted in many institutions [12].



Developing student nurses to work within the ever-changing healthcare landscape relies upon cultivating and developing independent thinkers, able to critically reflect upon concepts and apply these to practice [13]. Employing interactive approaches to learning can assist in developing these skills [14]. Utilising the workshop methodologies to deliver a whole block of learning within a pre-registration program can allow nurses to develop the skills needed to face working in modern healthcare with an ever-increasing burden of disease prevalence in society [15]. Moving beyond single workshops to adopting the workshop methodology for a full-time nine-week program of study requires the educator to engage learners in a range of activities that utilise small group activities, problem-solving games, scenarios, discussion, debates, simulations, videos and indeed role play to develop the learner's engagement with the topic and the facets of their roles in practice.

It has been emphasised that engaging learners with study materials, incorporating group learning, and facilitating dynamic learning strategies is essential, moving away from the traditional didactic approaches commonly adopted in many institutions [16]. Developing student nurses to thrive in the ever-changing healthcare landscape hinges on nurturing independent thinkers who can critically reflect on concepts and effectively apply them in practice [17]. Employing interactive learning methods can significantly aid in cultivating these essential skills [18].

Utilising workshop methodologies enables learner nurses to acquire the skills necessary to navigate the complexities of modern healthcare, particularly given the increasing burden of disease in society [19]. Transitioning from isolated workshops and didactic teaching methodologies to a comprehensive nine-week program that adopts this methodology requires educators to engage learners in a variety of activities [20]. These activities can encompass small group work, problem-solving games, scenarios, discussions, debates, simulations, videos, and role-play, all designed to enhance learner engagement with the subject matter and the various aspects of their professional roles. Dorri, et al [21] highlight this modality's importance in enhancing trust and open exchange of ideas within a supportive learning environment.

The curriculum

A module entitled 'Ensuing quality in Care' was taught over nine weeks to 52 learners. It is one of nine modules provided to undergraduate nurses undertaking a three-year full-time professional degree program.

The course includes 133 hours of taught delivery, 100 of which are taught through the workshop methodology, 33 hours of self-directed asynchronous learning, and 130 hours of independent study. At the end of the nine-week taught component, a clinical placement is followed by formative and summative assessments.

Programme Evaluation

Methods

Following the completion of the taught component of the programme, the author utilized a student survey at the completion of the module taught component, following the declaration of summative assessment results. The purpose of the survey was to evaluate the students' perceptions of the workshop methodology used within the module.

Participants

Of the 52 students who took part in the programme, 46 students participated in the evaluation (n=52/46). These were second-year nursing students. The survey assessed students' perceptions on the impact of their course of study using the workshop methodology and completion of the module. The evaluation was undertaken as a continuous quality improvement initiative in December 2024 to develop the module programme delivery.

Survey

This survey was designed to evaluate students' self-reported effectiveness of a workshop-based teaching approach compared to traditional lectures. Its primary aim was to determine whether the workshops successfully conveyed learning objectives, enhanced participants' understanding of the subject matter, and generated greater interest in the topic. The survey investigates whether diverse learning methods contributed to a more engaging and effective educational experience.

Additionally, the survey explores whether the workshops allowed for a deeper exploration of the material compared to practical learning in placement and whether they improved participants' ability to apply their knowledge and develop critical thinking skills. Furthermore, it seeks to understand the impact of the



workshop methodology on student's self-reported assessment outcomes, specifically whether it led to self-identified improved grades.

The survey also assesses the level of support and interaction provided during the sessions, focusing on participants' comfort in asking questions and engaging in discussions. Lastly, it gathers qualitative feedback regarding participants' positive experiences and suggestions for improvement, offering a comprehensive assessment of the strengths and weaknesses of the workshop methodology employed.

Thirteen questions were asked using a Likert-type scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree) to highlight feedback from the student cohort (Fig.1).

Three questions (questions 13-15) (Fig.1) were open-ended, allowing for a qualitative theme analysis.

Fig. 1.

Question #	Survey question
1	The workshop sessions' aims and learning outcomes were clearly explained, which enhanced my understanding
2	The workshop sessions were made interesting through various learning approaches, including lectures, role play, group discussions, and videos
3	The workshop sessions made the topic more interesting
4	I have a better understanding of the topic of the module following the workshop sessions
5	I believe that I have enhanced my knowledge and understanding after the sessions
6	I believe the sessions have allowed me to explore the topic more deeply than I could during placement
7	The workshop learning style improved my learning experience
8	The workshop learning style enhanced my ability to apply knowledge and deepened my understanding of the topic.
9	I have enhanced my critical thinking skills through engagement with the workshops I attended
10	I feel that I have engaged more with the workshop methodology in this module than I would have with traditional lecture-based teaching
11	I feel that I have achieved a better passing grade in the summative assessment because of the workshop teaching method used in the module.
12	I feel I have been able to ask questions and discuss the topics in a supportive way
13	Could you list three things you have enjoyed from the module where workshop methodology was used
14	Could you list three things that could have been improved within the module where workshop methodology was used
15	Any other comments about the workshop methodology used to deliver content in this module

Data Analysis

Student survey results were collated and numerically assessed (survey questions 1-12) as per Fig. 2. The written feedback responses were further analysed, and a thematic analysis was performed related to survey questions 13, 14, and 15. These questions explored the students' self-reported comments and have been summarised in word cloud format.



Fig. 2.

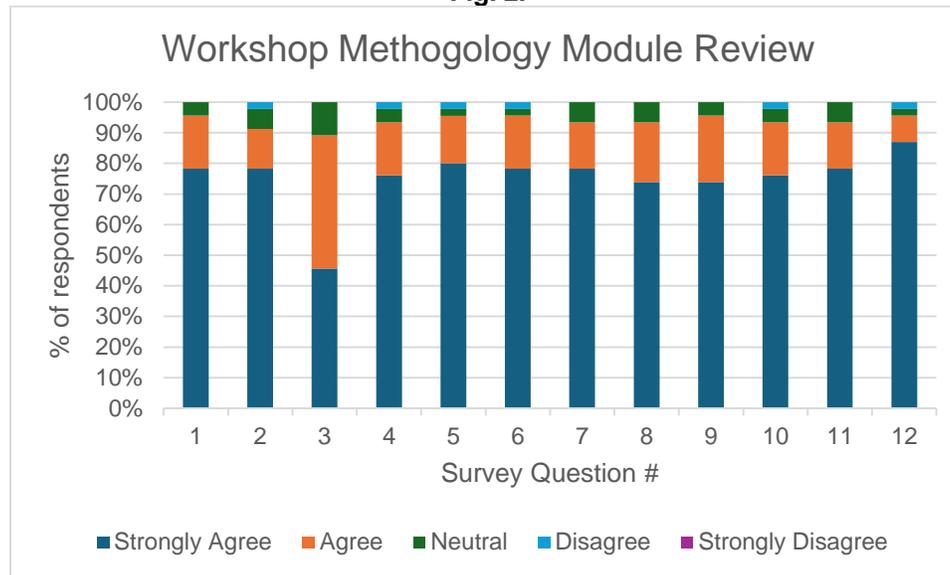
Question #	Survey question	Strongly				Strongly				Responses	Mean	Median	Mode	SD
		Agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree	Disagree					
1	The workshop sessions' aims and learning outcomes were clearly explained, which enhanced my understanding	36	8	2	0	0	0	0	46	4.74	5	5	0.54	
2	The workshop sessions were made interesting through various learning approaches, including lectures, role play, group discussions, and videos	36	6	3	1	0	0	0	46	4.67	5	5	0.69	
3	The workshop sessions made the topic more interesting	21	20	5	0	0	0	0	46	4.35	4	5	0.77	
4	I have a better understanding of the topic of the module following the workshop sessions	35	8	2	1	0	0	0	46	4.7	5	5	0.65	
5	I believe that I have enhanced my knowledge and understanding after the sessions	36	7	1	1	0	0	0	46	4.76	5	5	0.61	
6	I believe the sessions have allowed me to explore the topic more deeply than I could during placement	36	8	1	1	0	0	0	46	4.72	5	5	0.64	
7	The workshop learning style improved my learning experience	36	7	3	0	0	0	0	46	4.72	5	5	0.64	
8	The workshop learning style enhanced my ability to apply knowledge and deepened my understanding of the topic.	34	9	3	0	0	0	0	46	4.69	5	5	0.61	
9	I have enhanced my critical thinking skills through engagement with the workshops I attended	34	10	2	0	0	0	0	46	4.7	5	5	0.65	
10	I feel that I have engaged more with the workshop methodology in this module than I would have with traditional lecture-based teaching	35	8	2	1	0	0	0	46	4.7	5	5	0.65	
11	I feel that I have achieved a better passing grade in the summative assessment because of the workshop teaching method used in the module.	36	7	3	0	0	0	0	46	4.72	5	5	0.64	
12	I feel I have been able to ask questions and discuss the topics in a supportive way	40	4	1	1	0	0	0	46	4.8	5	5	0.53	
13	Could you list three things you have enjoyed from the module where workshop methodology was used													
14	Could you list three things that could have been improved within the module where workshop methodology was used													
15	Any other comments about the workshop methodology used to deliver content in this module													

Qualitative Questions - Thematic Analysis

Results

Forty six student nurses completed the evaluation. All students completing the final summative assessment achieved a passing grade achieving a module classification of 2:1 or above. Fig.6. identifies the results of the survey, with the highest rated scores being attributed to questions 1,2,4,5,6,7,10,11,12).

Fig. 2.



The Thematic analysis of the qualitative survey questions (13,14, and 15) has been summarised into question-specific word clouds as a graphical representation of the responses. 'What the students enjoyed from the module' (Fig.3.), 'Would like improved' (Fig.4.) and 'Overall comments on the workshop methodology' (fig.5.).



Fig. 3. What the students enjoyed from the module.



Fig. 4. Would like improved.



Fig. 5. Overall comments on the workshop methodology.





Results and discussion

The survey results show overwhelmingly positive feedback about the workshop-based methodology used in this module. Participants consistently expressed a strong understanding of the workshop's aims and learning outcomes, with the highest average agreement on the clarity of these explanations. This foundational clarity has established a solid basis for the overall learning experience.

Engagement and Enhanced Interest:

The diverse learning approaches utilised received high ratings. These methods successfully increased interest and engagement in the topic. Participants found the workshops more engaging than traditional lectures, highlighting the effectiveness of interactive teaching techniques.

Deepened Understanding and Knowledge Application:

Most respondents reported that they gained a better understanding of the module's topic, improved their knowledge, and explored the subject in greater depth than they had during their placements. This indicates the effectiveness of the workshop's methodology in promoting deeper learning and knowledge application. Participants perceived the workshop's learning style as a significant enhancement, allowing them to apply their knowledge more effectively and deepen their understanding of the topic.

Skill Development and Assessment Confidence:

Participants indicated enhanced self-reported critical thinking skills, increased engagement, and a belief that the workshop methodology contributed to better assessment outcomes. The consistently high scores, with the mode being 'strongly agree' for almost all questions, and low standard deviations show a high degree of consensus among respondents. This suggests that the workshop methodology improved understanding and boosted students' confidence in their ability to apply the learned material in assessments.

Supportive Learning Environment:

The ability to ask questions and discuss topics in a supportive environment was particularly appreciated, receiving the highest average rating. This underscores the importance of creating a safe and encouraging space for learning. The positive feedback highlights the value of interactive workshops in fostering a collaborative and supportive learning atmosphere.

Thematic analysis of qualitative questions

Enhanced Engagement and Satisfaction:

The workshop methodology employed in this module has proven to be highly effective in creating a positive learning experience for nursing students. This is reflected in the overwhelmingly positive feedback received, with students reporting higher engagement through active participation in group discussions, practical activities, and role-plays. Consequently, their overall satisfaction increased significantly. This interactive approach made the learning process more enjoyable, with comments describing the experience as "interesting, engaging, and fun." It also fostered a sense of community and active involvement, which are essential for professional development.

Improved Understanding and Knowledge Application:

The workshop methodology led to a self-reported better understanding of the topics covered. Students indicated that they grasped complex concepts more effectively through practical applications and in-depth discussions. Comments such as "the topics were covered in real detail" and "the practical activities really made the topic make sense" highlight the effectiveness of this approach. By focusing on real-world scenarios and developing practical skills, students were able to apply their knowledge meaningfully, resulting in a deeper understanding of the subject matter.

Supportive and Effective Learning Environment:

The supportive learning environment, nurtured by engaged and enthusiastic lecturers, greatly enhanced the students' learning experience. Lecturers received consistent praise for their approachability and willingness to engage with students, fostering a sense of belonging and encouraging active participation. This positive atmosphere significantly contributed to the overall effectiveness of the workshops.

Practical Relevance and Efficient Delivery:

The module emphasised practical application and real-world relevance, which students highly valued. They appreciated the clear connection between the workshop content and their future nursing careers, highlighting the importance of developing practical skills. Furthermore, the efficient use of time and well-organised structure of the workshops contributed to a positive and productive learning experience.

Areas for Improvement: Pacing and Content Delivery:



Some areas for improvement were identified, particularly regarding pacing and time management, as some students felt rushed. Additionally, the repetition of content and activities, along with inconsistencies in the format and structure of the workshops, was noted. These issues highlight the need for a more streamlined and carefully planned curriculum to ensure optimal learning outcomes.

Enhancing Nursing-Specific Scenarios and Interprofessional Learning:

Moreover, students expressed a desire for more nursing-specific scenarios and practical applications and increased opportunities for interprofessional learning. This indicates a strong interest in applying their knowledge to real-world nursing contexts and collaborating with other healthcare professionals as indeed would occur in practice.

Conclusion

Based on a thorough analysis of the survey data, the workshop-based methodology used in this module proved to be highly effective and well received by students. The descriptive statistics, which show high mean and median scores along with low standard deviations, indicate a strong consensus among participants regarding the benefits of the workshop format.

Students reported significant improvements in their understanding of the subject matter, enhanced application of knowledge, and the development of critical thinking skills. The interactive and varied learning approaches employed in the workshops—such as role-play, group discussions, and videos—were successful in increasing student engagement and interest, even surpassing the effectiveness of traditional lecture-based teaching.

Participants noted that the workshops allowed them to explore topics in greater depth than they could during practical placements, highlighting the unique contributions of the workshops to their learning experience. Additionally, the supportive environment fostered by this methodology encouraged students to ask questions and engage in discussions more comfortably, further enhancing their overall learning experience.

The data strongly indicates that the workshop methodology improved students' comprehension and skill development, while also boosting their confidence and leading to better assessment outcomes. The overwhelming consensus, with most responses falling under "strongly agree" or "agree," underscores the overall success of this pedagogical approach.

The workshop format has proven to be a valuable and effective educational strategy, significantly enhancing student learning and satisfaction. To further improve this approach, it is essential to address student feedback and engage in ongoing pedagogical research. These efforts will help refine the methodology, ensuring it continues to promote engagement, satisfaction, and a deeper understanding for future nursing students. By embracing student feedback and prioritising continuous improvement, this module will remain a valuable learning experience in our current nursing programme.

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