



## Review

# Team based learning in nursing and midwifery higher education; a systematic review of the evidence for change<sup>☆</sup>



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## ABSTRACT

**Review Aim:** The aim of this study is to review the evidence in relation to the experiences and outcomes of students on nursing and/or midwifery higher education programmes, who experience team based learning.

**Review Objectives:** To examine the relationship between team based learning and attainment for nursing and midwifery students in professional higher education.

To examine the relationship between team based learning and student satisfaction for nurses and midwifery students in higher education.

To identify and report examples of good practice in the implementation of team based learning in Nursing and Midwifery higher education.

**Design:** A systematic Review of the literature was undertaken. The population were nurses and midwives studying on higher education pre and post registration professional programmes. The intervention was learning and teaching activities based on a team-based learning approach.

Data sources included CINAHL and MEDLINE. ERIC and Index to Theses were also searched.

**Review Methods:** International research papers published in English between 2011 and 2017 that met the inclusion criteria were included in the study. Papers that met the criteria were subjected to quality appraisal and agreement amongst authors for inclusion in the review.

**Results:** A total of sixteen papers were reviewed and four themes emerged for discussion. These were Student Engagement, Student Satisfaction, Attainment and Practice Development and Transformational Teaching and Learning.

**Conclusions:** There is a tentative, though growing body of evidence to support TBL as a strategy that can impact on student engagement, student satisfaction, attainment, practice development and transformative teaching and learning. The literature indicates that implementing TBL within the curriculum is not without challenge and requires a sustained and structured approach. Staff and students need to understand the processes involved, and why they should be adhered to, in the pursuit of enhanced student experiences and outcomes for nurses and midwives in Higher Education.

## 1. Introduction and Background

There are many drivers for changing the way we deliver higher education for health professionals. Primarily we need to respond to the global changes to the delivery of health services. Global demographic and societal changes that include wide variations in life expectancy (OECD, 2015), significant inequalities in health that impact on health and wellbeing for different reasons. For example, there is a rise in the middle classes and the need to deliver long term care and chronic disease management to an aging population that is driving the transformation of health service financing and delivery. Conversely,

according to the Central Intelligence Agency (2013) 18.4% of the world population were living in extreme poverty with limited or no access to healthcare. There is a therefore a global need for long-term cost savings and better patient outcomes and it is imperative that health professionals are enabled to practice confidently and competently, think independently and make clinical decisions based on a sound evidence base in order to drive these changes forward. There is a critical need for leaders who can inspire confidence within their colleagues and manage resources strategically, for leaders with vision who instill confidence in service users. The challenge for educators in higher education today is to ensure that the product we deliver, our graduates, are ready to

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become those dynamic leaders of future health service delivery. The challenge is to deliver a curriculum in which our students can thrive, to create an environment that nurtures confidence and growth, an environment that respects individuality and diversity, an environment in which students learn to hear their own voices and truly understand themselves and their place in the world around them. This challenge is set against a background of change; changes in the expectations of students and policy changes that underpin and drive change forward. The study reports on a systematic review of the literature on Team Based Learning (TBL) in nursing and midwifery higher education, and critically explores its capacity for driving change and improving key performance indicators.

## 2. Policy Context

From a UK perspective the government has published its 2016 HE White Paper, entitled *Success as a Knowledge Economy: Teaching Excellence, Social Mobility and Social Choice*. The proposals outlined aim to drive improvements in the quality of teaching, safeguard the development of graduates fit for employment and ensure that universities deliver higher education that is value for money. The white paper also paves the way for a link between quality and student tuition fees. At the same time, the non-refundable bursaries that have long supported student nurses and midwives through their undergraduate studies are to be withdrawn in England and from September 2017 these students will be fee paying through the student loan system, which requires re-payment through taxation following graduation. Internationally, the education and training for nurses and allied health professionals is almost exclusively at a graduate level and likely to be subject to similar tensions in relation to quality and funding.

Further, it is vital that nurses and midwives are prepared for the complex roles and responsibilities required of them in the multifaceted health care environment of today (Nursing and Midwifery Council, 2015). Health Education England (2016) also make recommendations to support and advance the quality and standards of education “from Care Certificate level to PhD and beyond” and a career structure that will unleash potential to the benefit of the health and care workforce; to patients and communities.

To unleash such potential, an empowering education that will nurture the personal qualities of resilience and self-management is required. We also need students who are engaged and motivated and it is within this context that innovative approaches to delivering high quality learning experiences, that represent value for money and deliver student satisfaction and attainment, become vital. However, these drivers should be seen as a positive impetus to change as there is evidence that traditional approaches to learning and teaching no longer deliver the outcomes we desire (Gibbs, 2013) and often fail to motivate students. Many studies suggest that collaborative learning, where emphasis moves from the

passive participant to active involvement, develops greater thinking skills and problem solving abilities (Michael, 2006; Martin et al., 2008; Machemer and Crawford, 2007). The NUS student experience study (2012) reported that students consistently commented that they wanted more interactive classes. This was not just so that they could acquire the content, but also to develop peer relationships with their classmates, which they linked to good future employability skills.

TBL is a collaborative learning and teaching strategy designed around units of instruction that are taught in a three-step cycle: preparation (this may take the form of pre-reading and/or purposely designed study materials, which may be text/visual/other). Students then complete an in-class individual readiness assurance test (IRAT), consisting of 5 to 20 multiple choice questions. After submitting their individual answers, they take the same test with their team, the team RAT (TRAT). All members of each team share the same TRAT score, and both IRAT and TRAT scores count towards the students' grades (TBLC, 2017). This is important, as it provides a real incentive for students to learn materials beforehand, attend classes, and contribute to team discussions. The third stage of the process revolves around application exercises, undertaken within the teams, which help students learn how to apply and extend the knowledge that they have pre-learned and tested (TBLC, 2017).

This systematic review of the literature has been undertaken as precursor to, and to inform, large scale curriculum development in health higher education delivery aimed at improving student attainment, engagement, satisfaction and transformational growth, through the implementation of TBL across three core modules. The scale of the proposed changes mean that there is an element of risk involved and therefore it was anticipated that this review would provide insight into the chances of success and the factors that might facilitate greater success.

## 3. Review Aim

The aim of this study is to review the evidence in relation to the experiences and outcomes of students on nursing and/or midwifery higher education programmes, who experience team based learning.

### 3.1. Review Objectives

The objectives of the review were to examine the relationship between team based learning, student satisfaction and attainment for nursing and midwifery students in professional higher education and to additionally identify and report examples of good practice in its implementation.

### 3.2. Review Protocol

See Table 1 for review protocol.

**Table 1**  
Review protocol.

		Inclusion criteria	Exclusion criteria
Population	Student nurses, student midwives, nurses, midwives	Home and international students Undergraduate  Post-graduate Pre-registration Post-registration  Higher education setting	Non-health care education Non-nurse/midwifery education Further education Doctoral Primary or secondary education
Intervention	Team-based learning		
Comparator	Traditional lecture approaches to teaching & learning		
Outcomes	Progression, completion, attainment, retention, attrition, student satisfaction, student dissatisfaction		
Study	International research papers	Published in English between 2011 and 2017	Non-research literature Published before 2011

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