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Effective online teaching and learning practices for undergraduate health sciences students: an integrative review

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Abstract

Online teaching demand has increased to ensure accessibility and affordability of higher education. Student need support to assist with adjustment to the online context. Educators in the online teaching context are facing increased student numbers, resulting in a higher workload. Effective online teaching practices can enhance student and educator performances in health sciences.

The aim of this integrated review was to identify effective online teaching and learning practices for undergraduate health sciences students and educators.

Keywords reflected online teaching and learning practices for undergraduate students and educators in health sciences. Several data bases were searched and a total of 47 potential articles identified. The researcher scrutinized the titles and abstracts and identified 42 articles for critical appraisal. The Johns Hopkins critical appraisal instrument was applied and 36 articles were included in the integrative review. A subject information specialist assisted with literature searches. A co-coder enhanced objectivity. Data were thematically analysed through Tesch's open coding.

Two main themes emerged (i) Positive outcomes in online teaching and learning practices (ii) Challenges in the online teaching and learning context.

The findings on positive outcomes in online teaching and learning practices can enhance student satisfaction and retention. Challenges in the online context indicate the need for improvement in infrastructure and institutional support. Support includes training of educators to improve IT competencies and multidisciplinary team support to enhance course design and delivery. Recommendations are made for automated feedback for formative assessment; clarification and communication of expectations on prompt feedback by students and educators during initial online contact sessions; educators should enhance their online presence through a variety of learning activities and providing prompt feedback on student activities.

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