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The role of the ‘online’ Renal Course Tutor: how experienced nephrology nurses can create a new generation of leaders: 220

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Online and Distance Education is a phenomenon that is increasing in the global community. In 2007, we experienced our first step into acting as online Tutors for students completing Renal Professional Development modules. The key recommendation for teachers, according to Kunzle & Thomas (1994), is assisting students to complete nephrology nursing postgraduate studies including facilitating situational learning experiences and performing skills assessments. Therefore the role of the teacher in a ‘virtual’ environment has indeed provided many challenges.

Weekly quizzes and discussions based around current guidelines and clinical practice have provided the students with a firm theoretical platform and strong reflective practice skills, in order to enrich their careers and work towards postgraduate qualifications.

Acting in the tutor role has provided a fantastic opportunity to create and expand national networks. Observing and facilitating the personal and professional growth of the students has been incredibly rewarding. It is these new networks that will provide the next generation of nephrology nurse leaders as clinicians, managers and educators.

As senior renal nurses, it is imperative for us to create robust succession plans for our profession. This experience has facilitated a unique and innovative opportunity, which has assisted students to learn without the need to travel, while also providing an enriching personal journey for the tutors.