

iPASS: ONLINE COLLABORATIVE PEER-ASSISTED STUDY SUPPORT

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ABSTRACT

Peer-assisted learning is a powerful strategy to assist students to both develop effective study skills and to apply formative feedback in self-regulated learning environments/settings. In this study, existing successful face-to-face PASS learning activities have been translated into a virtual mode of delivery to enhance parallel online learning experiences. The model and template for the implementation and delivery of a cyber-peer-led team-learning (cPLTL) environment has been adopted from the initiative of Professor Pratibha Varma-Nelson [Smith et al., 2014]. Virtual iPASS sessions are hosted through the Adobe Connect tool which represents a platform that can enable a single PASS leader to synchronously guide up to 10 first-year chemistry students through collaborative study exercises. This technology enables students in the online PASS group to share their work with each other and with their leader while they are located in their preferred environment including their homes.

An objective of offering a virtual PASS option was that it would enrich the on-campus experience by enabling peer support access for students who could not, or who preferred not to, engage in the face-to-face contact sessions. Translation of activities involved consideration of the format of the tasks and the training of the iPASS leaders in facilitation of the sessions to deliver an inclusive environment. Evaluation of the effectiveness of iPASS has been achieved by the comparison of a trial pilot iPASS group in parallel with a traditional face-to-face PASS contact session. Consent was sought from participating students for researchers to record and characterise the nature of their interactions with their leader(s), provision of feedback and engagement with activities. Factors that must be considered for online peer support include students' technological literacy and group composition. The outcomes of this trial will be shared in this presentation.

REFERENCES

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