Empowering Nursing Students' Digital Literacy Skills: The Digital Literacy Project

The 'Digital Literacy project' is an ongoing research project at the Robert Gordon University, the aim of which is to drive and support the development of digital literacy skills among students in different discipline areas (e.g., nursing, law, library science, marketing, business, computing). In line with UK and global strategic priorities, the project aims to identify pockets of digital inequalities in students, to enhance their digital capacity as future digital citizens and professionals, and open conversations around digital literacy training and support for students. The project utilises a self-assessment digital competencies survey tool and a Digital Competencies Toolkit (DCT) the aim of which is to support planning for the enhancement and enrichment of digital capacities of students as learners, citizens and future professionals. The toolkit is co-created with Student Interns and offers recommendations and ideas for the further training and support of students.

This presentation will offer an overview of the empirical exploration of self-assessed digital competencies of students studying in nursing courses in particular, addressing a range of digital competencies: information and communication technology proficiency and productivity, information literacy, digital creation, digital research, digital communication, digital learning and development, digital innovation, digital identity management and digital well-being. In the dataset presented, students reported low competencies in information literacy, digital research, and digital innovation and significant statistical subgroup differences were found between age demographics and pre/post-registration within most of the digital competence dimensions. The survey open-ended comments revealed that students encountered challenges around digital skills they had mostly developed via everyday life experiences and trial-and-error approaches. The presentation will also provide an overview of the Digital Competencies Toolkit that has been tailored for nursing students, together with current plans for embedding it into the curriculum.

Increasing awareness of existing digital gaps and offering tailored digital skills enhancement can empower students as future-proof evidence-based practitioners in an evolving digital healthcare landscape. However, it is important to develop clear insights into digital competencies gaps of students and design targeted educational digital skills training interventions.

More information on the project can be sourced via this publication and this press release.