



## **Combining web based classrooms and E-learn tools: Increasing access to nursing education in the Kimberley**

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People living in remote areas often have limited ability to engage in education and in particular to gaining a qualification in nursing. Until the introduction of the web based classroom into the School of Nursing, on the Broome Campus of The University of Notre Dame, there were no Tertiary education centres in Western Australia delivering nursing education programs to students living in remote regions, unless they were willing and able to leave their communities and families for extended periods. It became evident by the limited student enrolment numbers, prospective student interviews, student demographics and student completion rates that an innovative approach to providing a more inclusive educational approach, to people within the Kimberley and Pilbara region and specifically to Aboriginal people, was required.

One of the challenges to delivering education to limited numbers of students across vast distances is the expense from a financial and human resources perspective. Students also have difficulty staying motivated and engaged in courses when they are not seeing other students or their facilitators on a regular basis. The introduction of a web based classroom and interactive online toolbox turned these challenges around.

The web based classroom has the functionality to give students a sense that they are all sitting in the same classroom. Students have access to a video camera, microphone and text facilities so they can engage in conversation with their lecturer and other classroom students. The Maryann Martin hospital an interactive e-learning and assessment resource featuring scenarios, images and activities was developed with the School of Nursing, by eLearn Australia using Dreamweaver, Flash and animation techniques and provides students with interactive and engaging learning opportunities.

The success of the web based classroom within the School of Nursing has now spread throughout the Broome campus and is now used as the new blended method of delivery for the Broome Campus across all schools including delivery from the Fremantle to the Broome campus. The energy and passion that this new delivery method has created over the two years has provided a positive impact on both staff and students in opening up pathways and opportunities that would not normally be available to remote or regional students.