

A palliative debate between novices and experts in palliative care based on graphic novels: tested and approved as an educational tool by the NursEduPal@Euro team!

Danny Vereecke and Veerle Coupez of the Howest team hosted a hybrid transnational project meeting in Bruges for the NursEduPal@Euro partners. This is the report on their experience with an online palliative debate between the expert project partners and first year undergraduate nursing students of Howest.

In 2019, the NGO *Kom op Tegen Kanker* took the initiative to organise a [broad social debate](#) on the future of palliative care in Flanders. To stimulate conversations and debates they created 5 [storylines](#) on diverse palliative care situations.



“The idea was that our international guests would sit together in small groups with our first year nursing students to engage in a palliative debate based on the storyline of their choice”, Veerle Coupez says, “but the 4th COVID wave threw a spanner in the works.” The Finnish and EAPC partners could not travel to Bruges and the university college returned to the online teaching modus, so the novice/expert interactions had to be moved to online breakout rooms.

The international partners set the scene and took up the role of moderators in 45 min open discussions on the selected storyline.



“What was their understanding of palliative care? Why did they chose this particular story? What went well in this story? What could have been done differently or better in their opinion? What could be important for the development of palliative care in the future?”, were some of the questions that were asked to the students. Despite the setback of the digital context, both parties were very positive about the approach.

Here's a short anthology of the students' perception: “During the palliative debate we could not only exchange ideas but also personal experiences and views. This vision was different for each of us which made for an interesting learning experience.”, Liesje Bols; “I found the palliative debate very interesting. Learning about how things work in other countries and the conversations we had with these experts was a really nice experience. I certainly learned a lot.”, Lotte Delva; “I found it very instructive to get to know the different perspectives of people and countries. My vision of palliative care has definitely changed for the better!”, Lisa Vanderbeke; “I found the debate on palliative care very interesting! The cases really made you think. Palliative care often has a heavy and negative connotation but this was completely taken away by also seeing the many beautiful aspects of palliative care.”, Lotte Claeys.

And an assessment from some of our experts: “The students were very cooperative and very open in their communication”, Nicoleta Mitrea; “It was a very good opportunity to share, both the novices and the experts learned by

speaking in groups, it also helps to understand the level where you are in your learning, and the debate helps the novices to find out their own strengths and weaknesses”, Hökkä Minna; “I particularly enjoyed watching how the students engaged with one another to explore a deeper understanding of palliative care, and through critical reflection of the case stories, see how palliative care has value and a place in many healthcare situations. I hope the experience will inspire the students to be curious to discover more”, Joanne Brennan.

As educators we believe that the concept of a palliative debate is a great way to get a feeling of the “stage” students are at regarding their palliative care thinking and palliative care attitude. When a palliative debate would be organised at the start of each year, teachers could adjust the content and level of their classes to fit the “palliative care level” of their students.

A palliative debate clearly has a positive impact on the learning, views, and sensitisation of students regarding palliative care. Therefore, we would like to advocate its use as a learning tool to our colleague educators and the [EAPC Innovation in Nurse Education Task Force!](#)

Interested to use the graphic novels as a starting point for palliative care conversations with your students? Stay tuned on the NursEduPal@Euro website!

[As of December 19 2022, Intellectual Output 8 will be available on our virtual showroom in 5 different languages!](#)

[We invite you to use the materials and discuss your experiences with the NursEduPal@Euro community of educators on our intranet!](#)