

# **DEU: Collaborating to support and enhance student learning**

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This presentation focuses on the AKO Aotearoa nationally funded collaborative project between Counties Manukau District Health Board (CMDHB) and Manukau Institute of Technology (MIT) in developing two Dedicated Education Units (DEU) at Middlemore Hospital in 2009 using Action Research. CMDHB serves a diverse range of clients making up 11% (464700) of the New Zealand population. This diversity presents unique challenges in relation to retention and success of students. Furthermore the demographic composition of CMDHB staff is characterised by the fact that 52% of staff (69 ethnicities) are trained overseas which add to the complexity of nursing education. Both MIT and CMDHB are committed to improving student learning and are working together to ensure the best possible outcomes for students. The primary driver for the establishment of the DEU's was to create more superior clinical learning experiences for students, which in turn would produce highly competent registered nurses for CMDHB. The current preceptor model linked with the rapid turnover of staff, casualization of the workforce and rapid turnover of patients does not ensure quality clinical learning opportunities for nursing students and is unsatisfactory for registered nurses acting as preceptors. The DEU is to bring about a culture change that is more inclusive of the learning environment, more collegial and with a strong sense of belonging. In the DEU model everyone in the unit is focussed on education in a supportive environment where educators and clinicians share in the students' learning. This presentation will explore the reasons for establishing the DEU's, the collaborative partnership, the planning and implementation of the DEU's as well as the findings of the research up to the date of the conference.