



Redesign of a post-licensure population health course using an online virtual community environment.

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Research Question

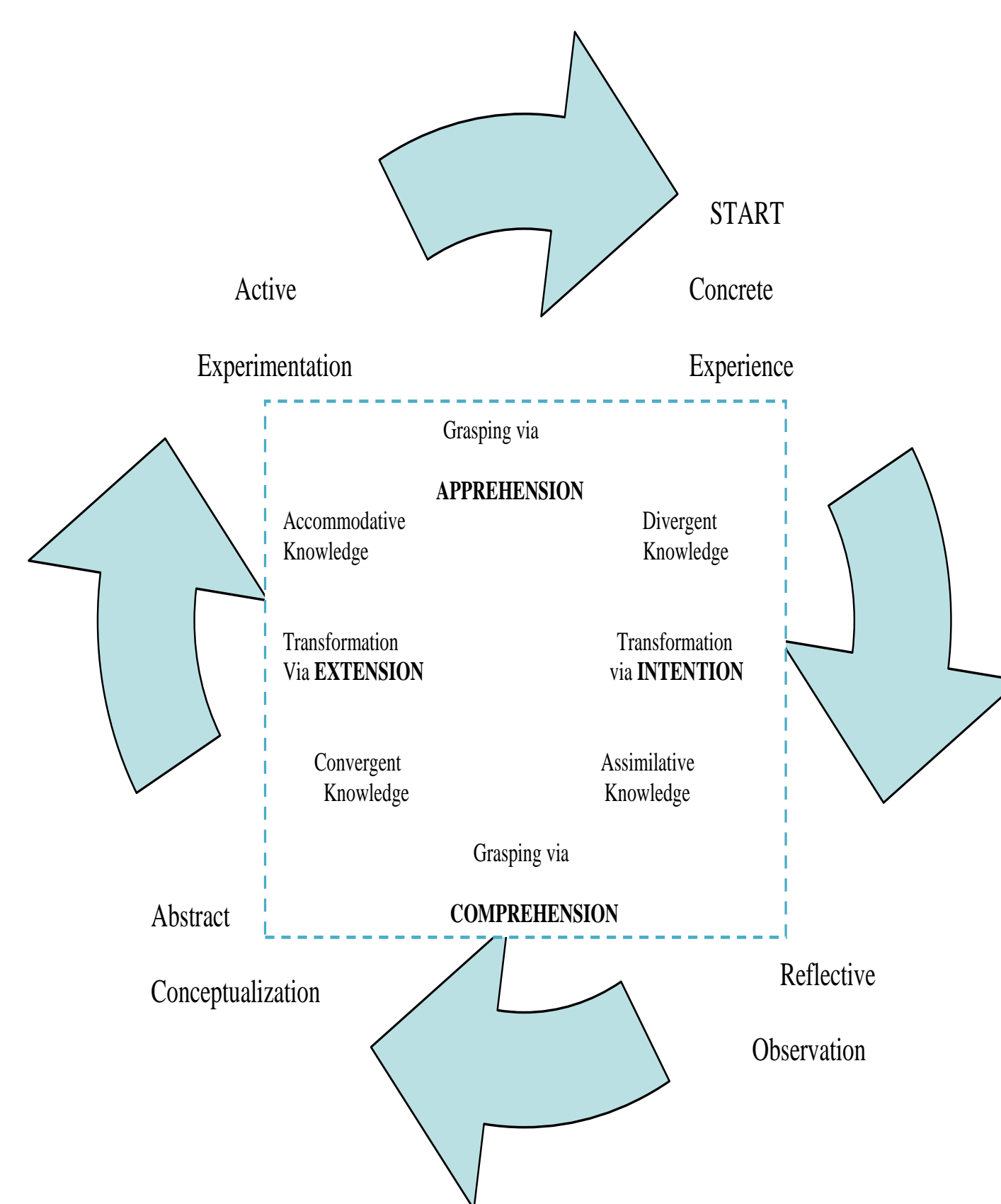
The research question for this study: Is the efficacy for the use of a virtual community supported; as the source for gathering information necessary for completion of assignments, and thus achieving student learning outcomes?

Introduction

- Need to provide a more standardized learning experience and role specific patient interaction for the students.
- Challenges faced in arranging a practicum experience
- Lack of opportunity to apply new learning
- Faculty report of inconsistent quality of student work related to those observation-only clinical hours.
- The faculty felt compelled to explore less traditional approaches to providing to the students the opportunity for patient assessment, exploration of the community based nursing role and development of a plan of care.
- The choice to move in the direction of using a virtual experience was based on current literature and in-depth discussion with product providers.
- A review of the Essentials for Baccalaureate Nursing (AACN, 2008) informed the review of current student learning objectives and writing of new ones to align with using a virtual community.

Theoretical Framework

Experiential Learning Theory

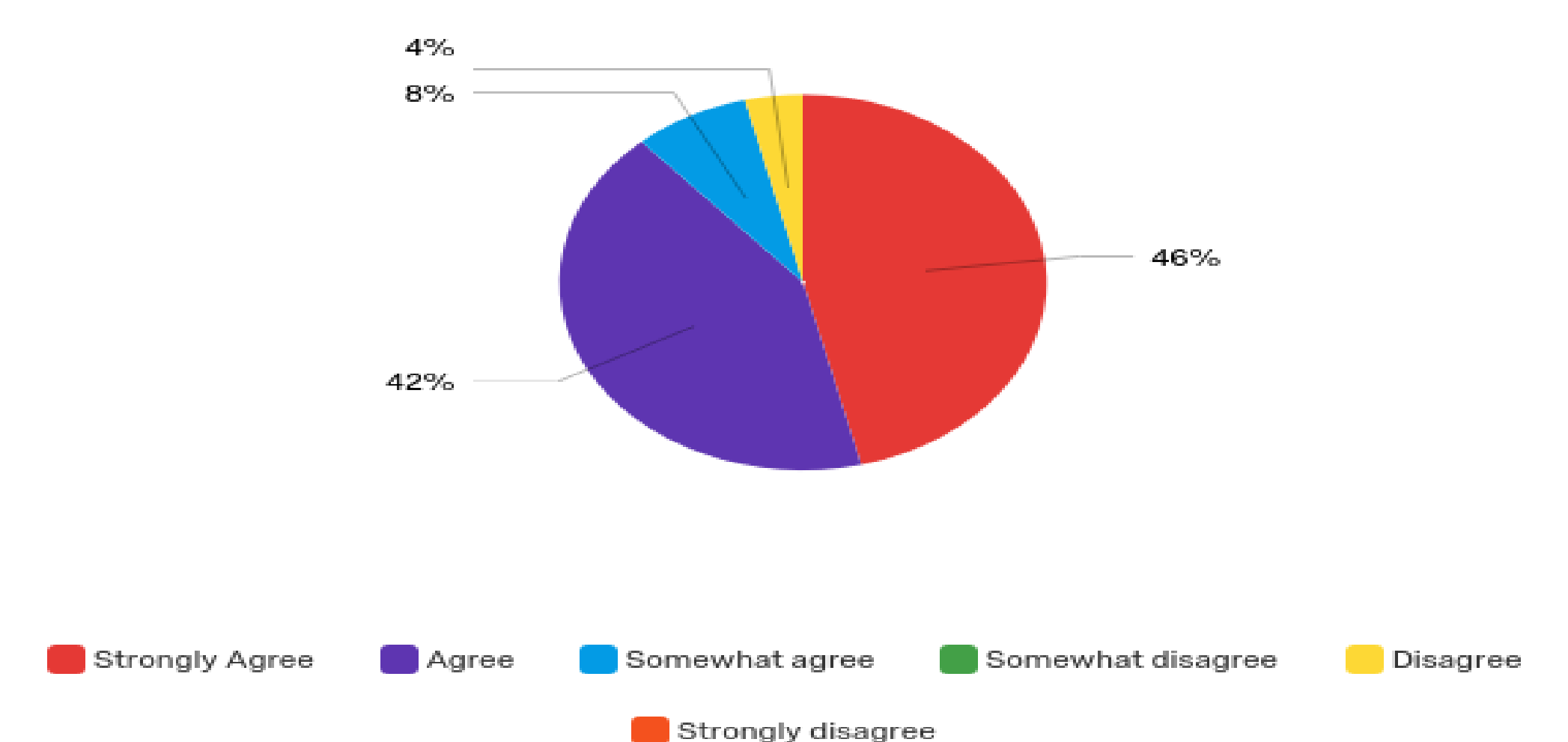


(Kolb, D., 1984, *Experiential Learning: Experience as the Source of Learning and Development*. Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice Hall.)

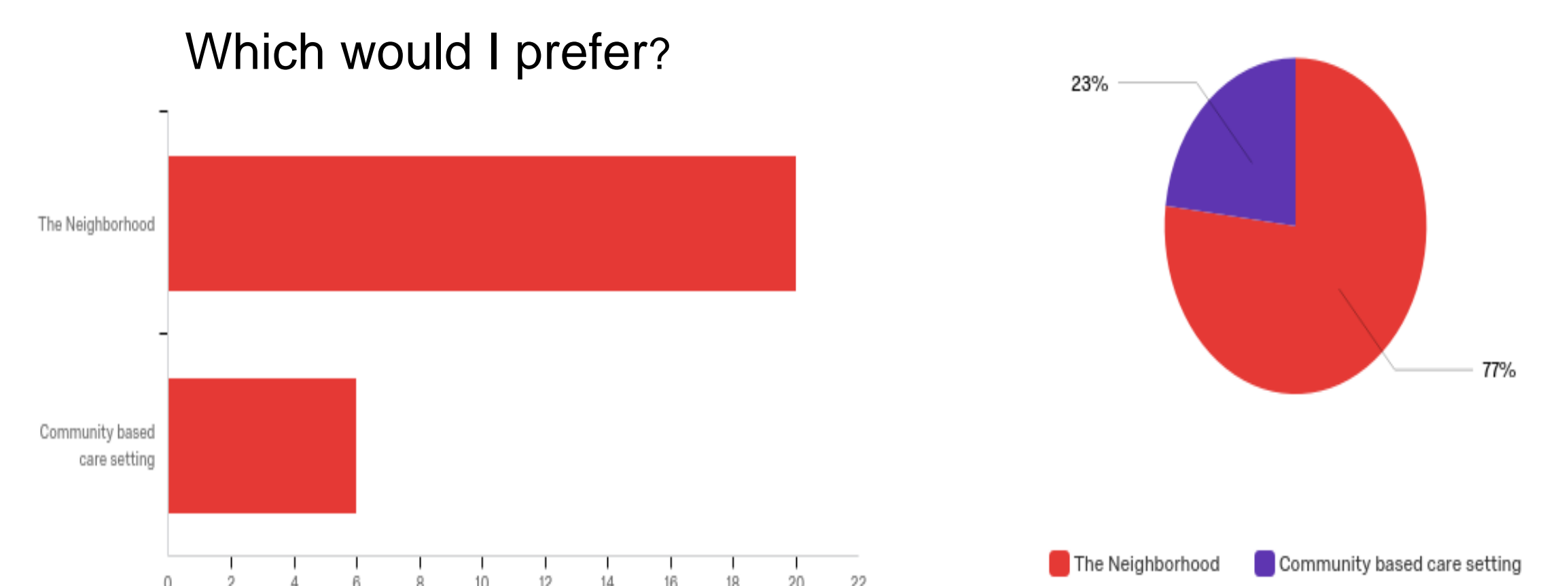
The Experiential Learning Theory developed by David Kolb (1984) and Constructivist Learning Theory developed by Jerome Bruner (1966) strongly supports the way in which students learn in traditional nursing curriculum; determining a plan of care for a patient in an environment that is readily available to the learner, and where they can draw upon present knowledge to generate new knowledge and understand new concepts.

Results

I was able to meet the course objectives using the virtual community.



Transfer of New Learning to the Practice Setting

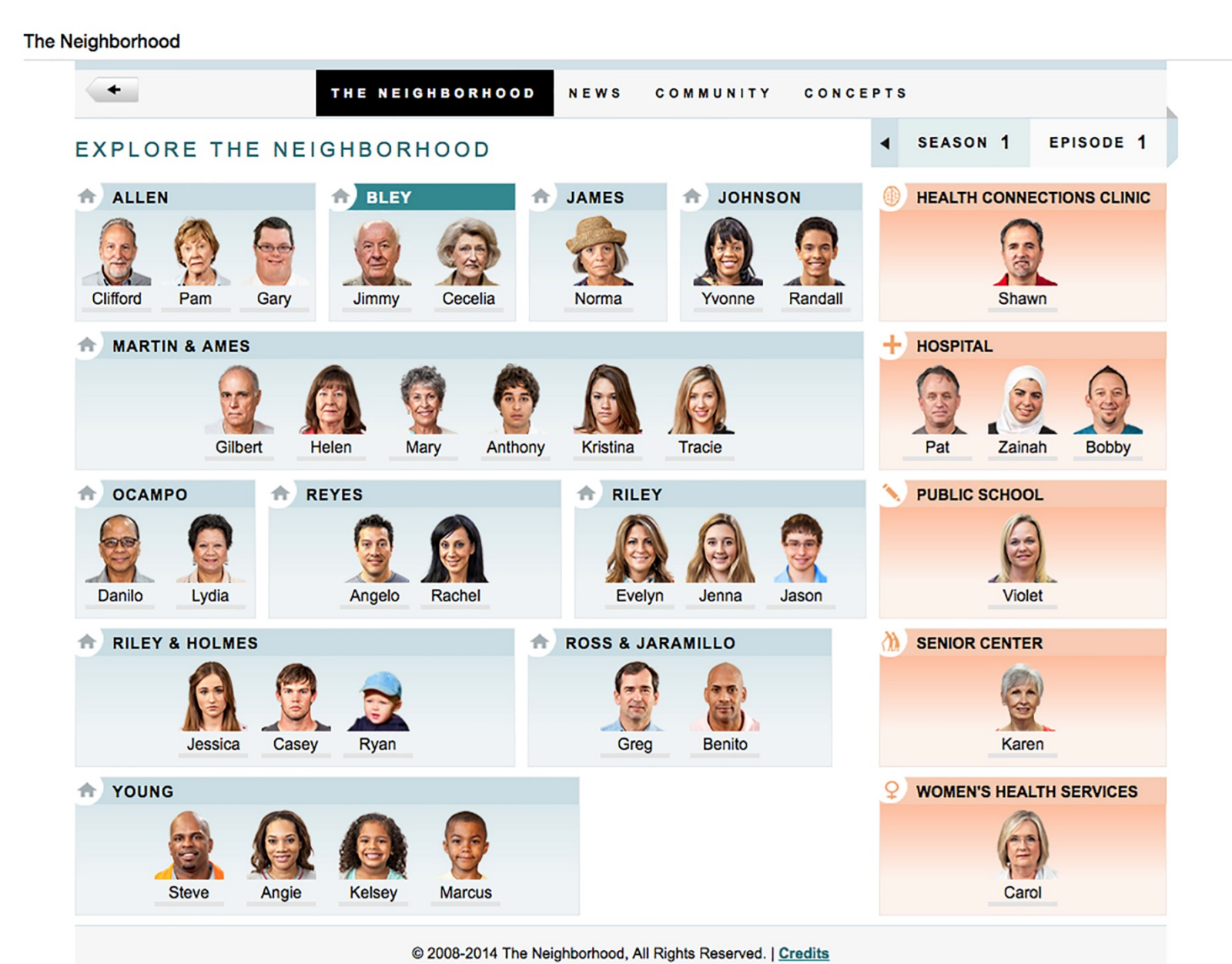


- Were they able to meet the course objectives using the virtual community: 88 % agreed or strongly agreed.
- Could they transfer the new learning to care of a live patient; 24 of the 26 respondents answered yes.
- Prefer the virtual community: 20 of the 26 .
- Advantages: "I encountered a wide array of experiences without having to do actual real-life observations, so it was more efficient and convenient." "These were true life scenarios." "Thorough information, complete family background and demographic information."
- Disadvantages: "Trying to remember what season and episode certain events happened." "You do not have face to face interaction with patients."

Method

- This study generated descriptive data via Likert type scale questions, dichotomous questions, and free text narrative questions via an embedded survey link within the last week of the course and/or an e-mail.
- The survey was constructed to measure student perceptions of a virtual learning experience, their own individual recall of the event, and unique insights as to whether course objectives were met.

Visual Representation



Conclusions/Future Directions

The entries made by the students for the Likert type scale, dichotomous and narrative items were compiled into a report for faculty review. A discussion group of teaching faculty yielded suggestions for changes to assignment, placement of assignments within the course and enhancement of rubrics. The responses provided by the students resulted in clarification of instructions for how to access the virtual community, assignment direction and more detail added in the assignment worksheets/tables. The virtual community will be used in an ongoing manner with revisions as indicated by student and faculty feedback.