Magogwe et al. (2014) suggests the development of information technology in the 21st century has seen an increase in communicating through social networking to complete group work. They suggest there are many benefits to communicating via social media platform, which include increased amounts of communication and the improved ability to share resources and ideas. As a group we began our communication on the university platform in the assigned groups and from here we decided on the use of the WhatsApp application to communicate via texting chat style. This has facilitated the ability to link files through email via our computer to phone and readily send them. It allowed an easy form of constant contact to confirm details of ask questions where needed rather than having to login the university platform to check messages, we would be notified if there were messages sent at any time. The application also gave us the ability to scroll back to previous messages to confirm tasks needing completion or to clarify any information previously shared.

We have practiced open and respectful communication throughout the group assignment which has allowed for a good form of contact to ensure we are understanding our roles, tasks and update the group quickly if anything about our situation changed, for example if we were caught up at work and would join the discussion later, or we had a sick child we needed to attend to. In contrast the application was also suitable for more formal discussions about the work at scheduled meeting times where we were all committed to being online at this time to make decisions and assign work. Rockinson and Wendt (2015) convey that effective communication is essential in the success of group work, however identified some channels of communication and lack of immediacy as limitations to online group work. The most suited form of communication will depend on the nature of the assignment and education mode, for example we are unable to meet face to face with the course being online and being from different states, therefore we needed to work towards communicating with the use of technology.

Virtual teams allow individuals of today to communicate and work in real time across different time zones and locations, with the creation and advances of the internet (Bergiel, Bergiel & Balsmeier 2008). Our team consisted of members from different states in Australia, and technology has allowed us not only to communicate but connect with each other throughout the duration of the assignment. Some of the factors found in a successful virtual team are trust, communication, leadership, setting of goals and technology (Bergiel, Bergiel & Balsmeier 2008). Trust is particularly significant to virtual teams due to the absence of physical and face to face interactions and believing that the team members will complete the tasks allocated to them (Bergiel, Bergiel & Balsmeier 2008). Our team originally had five members, however, we confirmed that the final count was three before deciding on the theme for the seminar. Having a smaller sized team keeps everyone involved, accountable and allowed everyone to have role clarity (DeRosa & Lepsinger 2010). Having trust amongst the group 25 can help improve timely and appropriate communication within the team, with the ability to share feedback about tasks or challenges (Bergiel, Bergiel & Balsmeier 2008).

Communication is one of the main hurdles faced in virtual teams, effective communication and the way information is shared is dependent on the task and goals of the project (Rockinson & Wendt 2015, DeRosa & Lepsinger 2010). Within a diverse group of individuals working together to complete a shared assignment, there can be a lack of engagement amongst group members, as it takes time to develop relationships, which can be even harder in virtual teams without face to face contact (DeRosa & Lepsinger 2010). Being part of a virtual team also allows members to be more confident and engage in dialogue at a period of their convenience, with the use of WhatsApp we managed to accomplish this. Our open and respectful communication throughout the assignment allowed us to voice our differences and handle them, to complete all our tasks efficiently. Team leaders are essential in giving credit to each member’s contributions and resolving any conflicts that may occur (Bergiel, Bergiel & Balsmeier 2008, Satell 2018).

Though our team did not have a leader, we were all aware of the tasks at hand and stepped forward to allocate and complete them. With each task we identified and allocated jobs fairly, allowing role clarity of each member’s contribution to the assignment. DeRosa and Lepsinger (2010) mentioned in their research that in some leaderless teams, members could be more informal and often more creative. Setting clear goals should involve all members of the group, and ensuring the team works positively towards a common goal, as without them will lead to ambiguity which will hinder the performance of the team (Bergiel, Bergiel & Balsmeier 2008, DeRosa & Lepsinger 2010). Our final goal as mentioned previously was to secure the best grade we could, and complete the assignment ahead of schedule, so we could edit and make any changes if needed. More immediate short-term goals we had as a team were completion of tasks allocated on time. Though we had some hiccups along the way with submission and sharing of completed tasks at said times, we were all very flexible and respectful of each other throughout the process, as we communicated and trusted each other to be accountable and complete each task. Virtual teams would not exist without the advancements in technology, the applications and platforms available make collaborating with teams convenient and effective (Bergiel, Bergiel & Balsmeier 2008). Our team possessed many elements such as trust in each other, effective communication and setting goals to allow for a collaborative success.

Further details of group member contributions, actions required and completed by group members including timelines and deadlines can be witnessed from the minutes from meetings in appendix 2.

Group work is a proven effective pedagogical theory of teaching, the many elements of successful group work have been explored and considered while completing our group assignment (Butler et al 2001). The members of group 10 have been brought together to complete this group seminar with the overall aim of completing our Masters in Nursing degrees in late 2018. We got started by introducing ourselves on the university discuusion area platform once being assigned groups, we did this in a timely fashion which facilitated efficient starting and planning of completing the assignment. Upon introduction we established we were all leaders in our fields with different nursing backgrounds and varying experiences. We also discovered our work schedules are largely different and home life and other commitments vary. The diversity of our backgrounds has given us a variety of experiences to draw on while completing the assignment, including experiences in large public tertiary hospitals and private sector hospitals. We began by brainstorming ideas about the assignment and discussing the outline of the task ahead. Group work can be achieved by setting goals in the beginning phase to ensure all group members are working toward the same result and will attain a similar work ethic, researchers suggest the major barrier to group work satisfaction and success is workload issues and expectations (Hastie & Burdett 2009). As a group we did not discuss and outline formal goals, however we set out to complete small tasks by certain deadlines. Through our professional discussions, we were committed to achieving the best possible result and would commit time and effort to the work.