



Maintaining standards for practice learning

Author: Julie Mann and Avril Butler

Academic Lead PQ Practice Education
University of Plymouth

Course details

Course title: PGCert/PGDip/MA: Education (Professional Practice Learning)

Level: postgraduate

Year: 1

Module title: 'Assessing Adult Learners in Their Practice'

'Supporting Adult Learners in Professional Practice Settings'

Discipline/Subject areas: Social work, also any profession which involves assessed professional practice

Activity details

What we did

This case study describes how we developed an interprofessional PGCert/PGDip/ MA: Education (Professional Practice Learning) as a pathway in the Integrated Masters Programme, Faculty of Education at University of Plymouth. The pathway has been accredited at GSCC PQ Higher Specialist Level and Advanced Level has been applied for. The pathway is open to anyone involved in supporting and/or assessing adults in their professional practice learning and would be of interest, for example, to social workers, clinical psychologists, health professionals and teachers.

Why we did it

With the demise of the Practice Teaching Award we wanted to ensure that the standard it had set could be maintained and developed rather than reduced.

What we wanted to achieve

We wanted to ensure practice assessors and supervisors would continue to provide learners with critically reflective support and assessment so that the quality of qualifying and post-qualifying social work would be sustained.

A short description of what we did

We entered into discussions with the Integrated Masters Programme, which sits in a different Faculty to our own. We sought and obtained validation for the new named pathway. This includes two newly developed 30 credit Masters modules at PG Certificate level, 'Assessing Adult Learners in Their Practice' and 'Supporting Adult Learners in Professional Practice Settings'.

Students then complete two further 30 credit modules (they may choose from a selection of taught modules or undertake Independent Study Modules) for PG Diploma (PQ Higher Specialist) level and then move on to the Dissertation stage of their MA: Education (Professional Practice Learning). We marketed the new pathway summer 2007 and delivered the PG Certificate modules to our first cohort of students between November 2007 and June 2008 through six one-day workshops on each module.

What worked well

- Collaboration with our colleagues in Faculty of Education (including planning and delivery of teaching sessions)
- Inclusion of sessions delivered by students and service users
- Blend of input and interactive exercises
- Use of students' current experiences as practice educators to enhance discussion and learning
- Funding obtained for one service user to undertake one of the modules

Problems and/or issues

- Gaps between workshop days and pressure of work for participants.
- Some students had problems accessing university intranet and library services
- Most students had considerable distances to travel to the taught days – this impacted at times on energy levels
- Cohort were all social workers apart from one service user

What students thought about it

- Interesting, thought-provoking modules delivered in an accessible way
- Delivering the modules concurrently was at times confusing
- Range of teaching methods employed enhanced learning
- Work pressures impinged on capacity to complete

Key messages

- Build on inter-faculty collaboration as this offers a rich experience for both learners and teachers
- Promote greater marketing to other professions to enhance interprofessional discussion of ideas and concepts
- Recognise the operational pressures in structuring the learning.

Related documents or links

www.plymouth.ac.uk/imp

www.placementlearning.org

Any other comments

These modules have provided a space for practitioners to become politically and critically analytical of the practice learning agendas and how to promote best practice.

180708/mj