



'Teaching Supervising and Learning In The Workplace' Course A short inter professional course for health and social care professionals leading to both professional and academic qualifications

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Origins of the course

An opportunity arose to combine the CCETSW Practice Teaching Award with mentor training for nurses and midwives (formerly ENB 997/998 , now ENB6590) Community nurses required the same preparation as Social Workers, leading towards their own professional development. Other professions, notably Occupation Therapy were involved from the inception. The Viability of the existing PTAP delivered at Oxford University was in doubt due to funding and recruitment concerns (loss of probation). The climate in Oxford Brookes University School of Health Care was favourable to combining with the School of Social Science and Law to plan and run this joint programme.

Purpose

The course was designed to meet the demand for good quality practice teachers, mentors and fieldwork educators. The original view was that they could benefit from learning alongside one another and the course was marketed as being multi-professional.

Desired Outcomes

We hoped that there would be a healthy mix of professionals taking the course who would increasingly value one another's roles and appreciate the learning opportunities, which could be shared with other professionals in the workplace. This was initially seen as particularly important for those working in multi- professional teams. By looking at the different ways in which learning takes place, and appreciating the similarities in approach and setting across professional boundaries a greater appreciation of one another's roles should lead to greater inter professional understanding. We hoped in addition to foster a greater readiness to share learning opportunities with each other.

Preparation and support

The heads of both schools in the university readily agreed to support the course, which secured the firm ground on which to build a working team. The establishment of my post as co-ordinator was seen to be vital to the continuity and viability of the programme. I am now dedicated to the course in a .75 fte.post for a further two years. The development of an enthusiastic team, who worked to identify similarities and differences, and to develop a shared goal, has been essential to the stability of the course. Clarity about funding through health trusts for the vast majority of the course participants has been instrumental in ensuring recruitment is high and a regular mix of professionals is achieved. University administrative staff have recognised the difficulties of working across two schools, and professional boundaries, and systems are worked out to solve each administrative problem as it arises!

Development issues

- Difficulties - admin support precarious with two schools involved - possibility of confusion and duplication if close watch not kept on all processes.
- Overwhelming numbers of nurses could swamp the other professionals, but common aspects of adult education, ethics and workplace learning /assessment form the focus of teaching. We ensure all professions get some relevant examples to meet their learning needs.
- Change over of teaching staff - need to induct new tutors carefully into the course ethos for learning .
- Standardisation of marking across professions needs careful organisation - double marking often used to check on this.
- On the plus side, the team has a strong emphasis on anti-oppressive / anti discriminatory practice and learning which has challenged the non social work members. In return, the Health Care professionals give a clear lead in the field of evidence based practice.

Course in Action

There is a lot of good practice in terms of teaching and learning strategies and assessment skills, which is being shared across the area as each course member completes and continues to work with learners. Other course members are commenting on the high demands the course makes, but this is not deterring people from applying. Multi -professional learning has now become inter professional learning, with much sharing of information and inviting to visit one another's workplace being the key outcomes here. Positive feedback from learners indicates that the course is equipping the members to teach, supervise and assess more thoroughly and fairly. A strong emphasis on reflective practice and use of learning cycles brings much shared experience into the discussions. Group learning (approximately 8 – 10 members) is facilitated by the course team. Direct input on key themes relating to adult learning, teaching and assessment in the workplace is delivered for the first eight weeks. Later modules focus on practice teaching and assessment, with portfolios of evidence (including observed practice) forming part of the assessment requirements. Social Workers and Community Nurses are required to take two taught and two practice modules, Nurses and midwives take only one of each.

Review/Hindsight

The course continues to run, and we are therefore able to implement change as we see the need for it. Current opinion would indicate that we could continue to meet the needs of all these learners, and that the interprofessional learning outcomes are of immense value. Key aspects which we need to address are:

- Tensions between managers wanting staff to be trained fast, and the need for good reflective learning to take place. (options for block teaching are being explored)
- Service requirements which cannot always ensure staff are released for teaching days (night shift, court appearances etc are a constant battle. Inconsistencies with regard to study time given cause concern for course members and tutors - we are trying to improve our relations with managers and service providers to help them understand the course requirements.
- This course cannot run if there is no dedicated time for the co-ordination of other team members.
- Allowance is not readily made for this in calculating the cost effectiveness of the course.
- We are particularly pleased with the way that professionals are learning from one another, and deliberately build in this opportunity to all modules. This appears to be carrying over into the workplace, where professionals are more ready to contact one another as they have a greater understanding of one another's roles. Exchange visiting - e g paediatric nurses visiting the maternity social worker to discuss work with drug abusing mothers. Informal discussions - a care manager contacting a district nurse for additional information on leg ulcer care. Just two examples of practitioner development. The spin off for learners is enormous - a much greater readiness to work with students from other professions in the multi professional team is a natural progression.
- Most course members appreciate the value of extending their learner's experience and feel justified in spending some time facilitating this , rather than seeing the need to maintain control over their learners learning at all times!

What next

We are being asked to extend our course delivery to nurses overseas, and in the course of this, we are exploring the possibilities for including other professionals - e.g. SSAFFA bases in Germany - where social workers are part of the primary care team. We are taking every opportunity to cement the concept of inter-professional learning into the new course structures being developed within the University.

We are trying to clarify funding structures to ensure we include voluntary as well as statutory organisations in the funding scheme (a long struggle, in some areas). We are also watching the new developments with regard to the future training of all professions, and the government directives with regard to the provision of Health and Social Care services. Within the university, there are changes to semesterisation from a three-term structure, and this will necessitate a restructuring of the whole course! We are already fully subscribed each term the module runs, but I would like to expand the course to include other professionals. Currently we have had OT's, Social Workers, Nurses (all specialisms) and community nurses and midwives on a regular basis. We have also had the occasional Physiotherapist, art therapist, paramedic, and blood transfusion service nurse. We are currently very much valuing the experience of course members from Hospices (children's and adult). Enquiries have been received from a variety of other professions – we would need to increase our intake to accommodate them all, but we do not want to compromise adult learning principles. It will depend on the University and NHS trust funding agreements.

This has been a fascinating, if exhausting experience - there are so many directions we could go in. At present, we need to watch and see what develops!



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