

Phase 1 PDP Practice Summary



Background

Profile of the cohort

It was decided to place this within a module of learning for third year Health Science students undertaking a work placement in a Health Promotion setting. The students were required to submit a 2,000 word reflective log worth 30% of the assessment strategy for the module and as this was something they had not previously encountered, bi-weekly tutorials were scheduled to enable the students to appropriately structure the log (it also allowed the tutor to check on the pertinence of learning occurring within the placement). The number of students on placement were small, and as they had always been a small tight-knot cohort good relationships existed among the students, making it more comfortable for them to discuss/share placement experiences (at the student's discretion). The small student number also meant that within the tutorials all had the opportunity to contribute and receive guidance. Focus Learner Questions (FLQs) were used to provide prompts for reflection and to help the students give structure to their reflective log as well as to try and ensure that content was pertinent and focused on learning, in terms of knowledge, skills and potentially personal growth.

BSc Health Sciences

SCQF: 9

University of Abertay, Dundee

Intended Outcomes

What was the main focus of the PDP activity?

The original intention to integrate a laboratory skills matrix into an online PDP tool for use with Forensic Science undergraduate

The Challenges

Issues encountered the required overcoming

Sticking points proved to be the very tight deadline for getting the project up and running, and also being a non-member of the course team made it difficult to negotiate time to integrate this into the student's coursework.

It was noted that for one student (academically able and mature) who did struggle with this piece of work, she did achieve a lower grade than other pieces of work which she has produced, however she was able to lift her overall mark for the module with the other units of assessment. Therefore tutorial staff needs to be mindful of the credit awarded to this type of work.

Established Practice

How existing practice help the process or was changed by it

Students were also encouraged to schedule individual tutorials with the tutor if they required additional help to structure the reflective log. Students were also invited to appendix items to the log which could evidence skills/knowledge acquired e.g. production of a leaflet/presentation. Once the students had started to structure their logs they were introduced to the ePDP tool being piloted by the Careers Service of the University within

Phase 1 PDP Practice Summary



one of the tutorials. The students were encouraged to transfer the knowledge, skills and personal qualities that they were recognising as part of the placement (along with other experience they had) into the online tool. This allowed them to generate curriculum vitae which they could add to as their academic career progressed, as well as formalising experience which they were gaining through other things which they participated in outwith the 'classroom'.

The ePortfolio Advantage

What PDP value was derived from the use of ePortfolios?

Some students did struggle to articulate their experiences in this manner, whilst others blossomed using the format. Some students were more open in their reflections than others. The reflective log allowed the students' enthusiasm for the placement to be captured and also allowed them to share with the module tutors, and where appropriate with their peers. The students also had to do an assessed presentation to fellow students on their placement, the range of activities they had participated in as well as the skills and knowledge acquired. This then allowed for a shared learning experience. Use of the reflective log also allowed the student to see the 'journey' they had taken from the beginning to end of placement and for them to consider the process of learning along that journey, rather than to focus on final outcomes. Of note was the fact that all students had positive experiences, probably enabling the process, but the occasional 'challenging' situation was also captured, and the learning which had occurred was also included.

Key Points for Effective Practice

The tutor who was helping the students construct their reflective logs is a registered nurse and has a professional requirement to keep a reflective portfolio and had 8 years of experience in helping student nurses to write reflective portfolios, so this made the task of providing tutorial support for these students easier in terms of keeping the focus on relevant and pertinent information to include.

The fact that the students were in their 3rd year of academia was both a positive and a negative – the positive being their cohesiveness as a group and their ability to express themselves in the classroom and in written work; the negative being that for those students who did struggle with the concept if it had been something they had been doing from the first year then this may have made the task easier.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Use of a word limit on the log was useful as it ensured that the students remained focussed, however in hindsight because of the amount of witnessed effort that the students put into this assessment the tariff in terms of academic credit has been increased to 50% of the total module mark, it is also hoped that for the students this will imply that this type of work is viewed as valued.

The evaluation is limited by the small numbers of students participating but it did allow the module tutors to revisit the assessment strategy and it did provide some valuable feedback for those piloting the ePDP tool.

Phase 1 PDP Practice Summary



Additional Information

Optional focus learner questions (i.e. not for sharing with whole group unless the student particularly wants to share some element of their choosing):-

- ❖ What happened on placement this week?
- ❖ What tasks were you asked to do?
- ❖ What preparation was required to complete the tasks?
- ❖ What skills/knowledge were needed to complete the task?
- ❖ How did I feel before completing the task?
- ❖ How did you feel on completion of the task?
- ❖ In hindsight, what might you have done differently?
- ❖ How useful was the task to others/you?
- ❖ What has this added to your personal development?
- ❖ What were my expectations of a situation?
- ❖ Were my expectations realised? If yes, how? If no, how?
- ❖ What have I learned from being present at this situation?