



ePortfolio

Challenge or Opportunity?

Capturing the process and assessment of learning in the practice context through the use of ePortfolio.

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Aim: To facilitate e-learning opportunities for post registration nurses in the development of a Unifying Specialist Practice (USP) ePortfolio as part of a BSc (Hons)/Post Graduate Certificate in Community Health Nursing programme of study.

Why a Portfolio?

Students have the opportunity to critically reflect on learning experienced, connecting theory to the reality of specialist practice including the social, cultural and political context they are working in (Cowley et al 2005). This builds on their knowledge, competence and capability as part of their professional and personal development (Anderson et al 2008). The completed USP Portfolio provides an overview of this process, the students' application of specialist knowledge in the practice setting and a means for assessment.

Why ePortfolio?

The evidence for each module within the USP Portfolio can be developed and stored within the ePortfolio space and students can create links to their evidence including reflective 'blogs' to connect to their learning at a particular point in time in their critical commentary. By learning how to create an ePortfolio students can utilise this approach as part of their continuing professional development (CPD) and life long learning post graduation, integrating elements of practice, education, research and information technology (SEHD 2005).

Process

Students were introduced to ePortfolios in Semester 1 attending workshops on 'blogging' and creating webfolios.

The development of the USP Portfolio took place in Semester 2 with taught input at QMU and work-based learning on community placement with practice teachers.

Each student created a webfolio for each of the USP modules. These were then placed in an overarching USP ePortfolio and submitted to the 'Gateway' for assessment by their practice teacher.

A panel of practice teachers and lecturers then moderated all the ePortfolios, supporting the development of the practice teachers' ePortfolio skills, and their learning and development in the assessment and grading of portfolios.

External examiners then accessed the Gateway. Following the Exam Board the students were able to view their ePortfolios with the assessment feedback, grade and moderator comments.



Outcomes

- The students, as QMU graduates, have access to their ePortfolio and can build on this as part of their CPD.
- This approach to the USP Portfolio has been recognised as Best Practice by Nursing's regulatory body.
- Practice teachers will have the opportunity to develop their own ePortfolios as part of their own CPD which in turn will support future students and colleagues.

Evaluation

The reality of facilitating the development of these students' portfolio and IT skills was a challenge and an opportunity.

- Students were challenged by this approach requiring, in the first year of ePortfolio implementation, a high level of support in the latter stages of ePortfolio construction;
- Students had the opportunity to be creative in the development of their ePortfolios and this has been enhanced following portfolio modification at programme review;
- In response to students' comments, the introduction to Pebblepad and ePortfolio construction happens at an earlier stage including the use of reflective 'blogging';
- The learning involved in facilitating this approach to ePortfolio development has been invaluable for staff and has created new insights into the process.



References

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- Cowley, S., Bergen, A., Young, K., Kavanagh, A. 2005. A taxonomy of needs assessment, elicited from a multiple case study of community nursing education and practice *Journal of Advanced Nursing*. 31 (1) pp.126-134
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