

# Flipped learning – placing your students and their employability centre stage

In the summer of 2012 a new Transition to Registered Practitioner Module Team was convened. The core module team (CMT) comprised of academic staff representing the four nursing fields (adult, child, learning disabilities and mental health), a careers consultant and colleagues from the personal development department.

The assembly of a new CMT afforded a period of reflection, consultation and critical review. Where appraisal from a modular, student, alumni, academic and career staff perspective was afforded. Considering what worked well and where improvements could be made to support nursing students through their transition and into their role as registered practitioners

A summary of the review outcomes was composed and a developmental action plan was created for the re-modelling of student learning activities. The action plan was based on current evidence base in support of fostering holistic aspects of employability (CBI, Universities UK, UUK, 2009, Pegg *et al*, 2012).

A constructively aligned student trajectory and thematic framework was created in order to bring student learning activities to life in the final six months of their undergraduate nursing programme (see diagram 1).

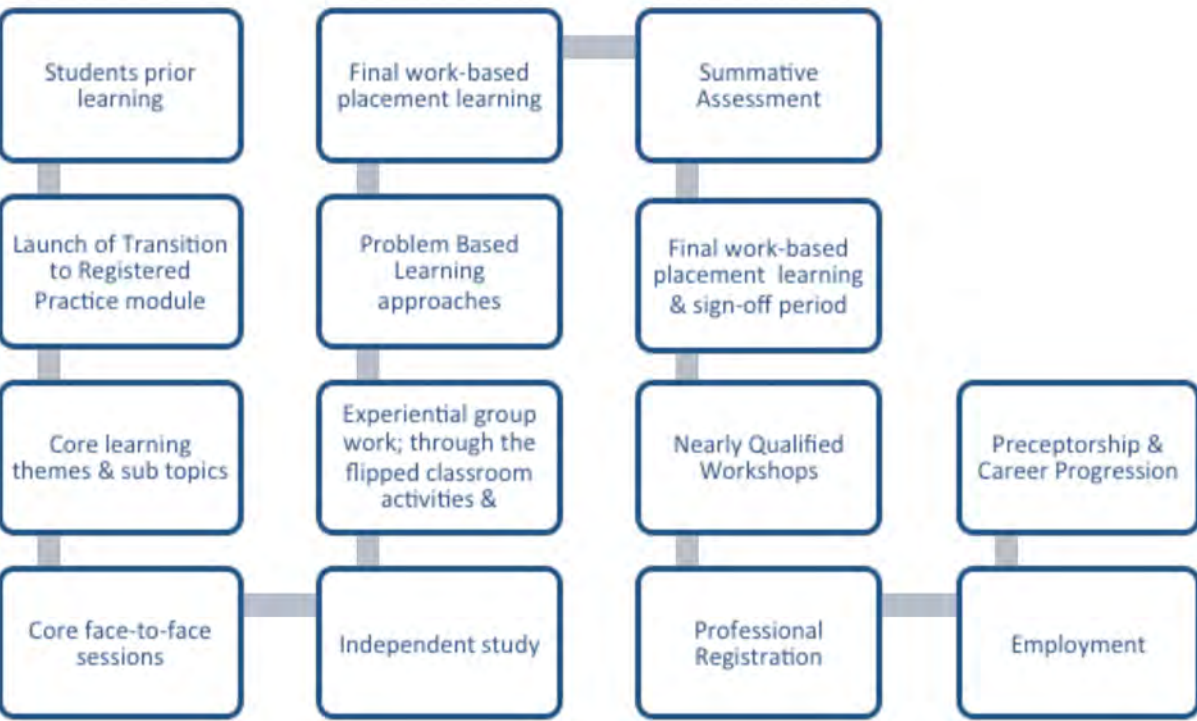


Diagram 1. Transition to Registered Practitioner Student Trajectory

The intended outcome of the students’ trajectory is to generate a seamless transition where students are supported in their move from university, into employment and the next chapter of their career. The aim is to assist students in coping with the reality of the challenges, role and responsibilities they are likely to encounter in the working world; fostering their own ability to survive and thrive in their new employment phase (Pearson, 2009, Willis 2012).

Students are empowered to achieve this through constructivist approaches e.g. experiential, social learning and group work, as they are well aligned to developing students’ employability (Pegg, *et al*, 2012). Under a framework of four core module themes and a series of sub divided topics (see table 2).

The CMT created themed electronic Learning Resource Packs (eLRP’s). The eLRP’s incorporated a diverse range of learning activities (quizzes, questions, video lectures, case studies etc.) associated to each theme/topic. Each topic has associated work-based placement considerations. The intention was that students could continue their personal learning journey while in the healthcare arena in placement learning opportunities.

Furthermore students would be supported to think about how they could apply their learning to their associated work-based learning placement, their placement competencies and their transitional phase. The aim is to foster student’s social learning opportunities (via flipped classroom activities; see below) in scheduled small group plenary sessions after independent and team learning time and prior to themed and nursing field specific Problem Based Learning (PBL) activities.

Members of staff set about video recording previous ‘lecture’ based sessions into small bite size video lectures alternatively known as vodcasts. A range of the recorded vodcasts were housed on a newly created module moodle page and aligned to students intended learning outcomes, assessment tasks and learning and teaching activities; including themed eLRP’s.

Theme 1 Professionalism	Theme 2 Becoming a registered practitioner	Theme 3 Getting the job that you want and being successful in your role	Theme 4 Mentorship, preceptorship and continual professional development (CPD)
Professionalism in nursing	Effective communication	Know who you are	Mentorship
The Nursing and Midwifery Council	Effective teamwork	Know what you want	Preceptorship
Chief Nursing Officers 6C’s vision	Assertiveness	The job application process	CPD and the knowledge and skills framework
Clinical Governance	Delegation	Nursing vacancies; job application rehearsal	CPD and the appraisal process
Accountability and the Law	Time management	Preparing for the job interview	CPD and the NMC prep requirements
Clinical Judgment and Decision Making	Stress management	Mock Interviews	Complex conversations
Medication Management	Leadership	C.v. and C.V. cover letters	Conflict resolution
Patient Safety	Influencing change	Looking for work	Making Every Contact Count (MECC)
The NHS constitution	Advocacy	Understanding employers & organizations	Safe practice

Table 2. Transition to Professional Practice Core Themes and Topics

The CMT introduced the concept of the flipped classroom as part of student learning activities. In a flipped classroom the traditional ‘centre stage’ teacher role shifts placing the student ‘centre stage’ and the teacher on the side guiding student’s learning activities (Strayer, 2011). Students first engage in Technology Enhanced Learning (TEL) resources (e.g. vodcasts/eLRP’s) communicating and preparing for class based activities with their peers. This prior independent learning is then brought to life as conceptual engagement activity through constructivist and social learning in the classroom with the aid of a facilitator (*ibid*).

Students are placed into branch specific action learning sets (ALS) (3-5 students per set) and each set was allocated a themed topic. Students, in their ALS, are afforded the ownership and responsibility to create a ten minute presentation, in varying formats, to deliver to their peers, the rest of their group and the facilitator.

In theme one, students are asked to deliver a power point presentation on their topic allocation. In theme two students are afforded the choice of preparing a poster/leaflet/flyer on the topic consignment. And in theme four, although assigned a topic, students have a totally free reign on their presentation method.

Theme three differs in that the activities centre on enhancing student employability. In this context the eLRP is created as an individualized student resource. Students are invited to create a first draft mock job application form to bring to a plenary based session. These are based on updated branch specific job adverts, job descriptions and personal specifications used by local NHS recruitment teams.

In theme three activities students, in their ALS, act as mock recruitment and selection panels peer reviewing (using a peer-feedback sheet created by the CMT and based on NHS job application forms) each other’s job application forms selecting the ‘best’ candidates to invite for interview. This emphasizes the competitive nature of applying for newly qualified nursing vacancies. After this session students are invited to revise their draft job application forms and to ‘submit’ as they would an assignment. Students are then scheduled to attend a mock job interview. At the interview students receive formative written and verbal feedback on their job applications and interview technique. Mock interview panels comprise of academic and careers staff, alumni and in some cases (mental health) service user involvement.

*‘This module has prepared us well for our final placement and our career’*

In themes 1, 2 and 4 students are guided to present their topic utilizing current evidence base through the use of the themed e-LRP’s and TEL resources. As well as to inform their peers as to how the topic related to them now, in their future role as a qualified nurse and critique the attitude, attributes, knowledge, values and behaviours required of them throughout their transitional phase and into the next stage of their career; and how all aspects related to professional, regulatory and statutory requirements (e.g. NMC).

In experiential group work sessions and the time where the ‘delivery’ of the student’s ALS work is facilitated using the flipped classroom format students have to listen to a total of nine presentations (in groups of 45-50 students). After each ALS presents their assigned topic the group are asked questions by their peers and facilitator who additionally provided formative feedback. This enabled students and their ALS to learn from their strengths and areas for development week-on-week. Empowering and enabling themselves and each other as their self-efficacy, self-esteem and self-confidence grows. Furthermore it allows for regular and repeated reflection, as an individual and in a group, evaluating their own and each other’s progress as they engaged in participative social learning.

*‘Very relevant, an eye opening module to my role as newly qualified nurse’*

We know that the attention of students is typically maintained for about 10-15 minutes (Biggs and Tang, 2011); hence why each action learning set is afforded ten minutes to present their topic; this is aligned to the length of time students are afforded to present when conducting summative assessment activity. A short rest or change in activity every fifteen minutes is known to restore performance (*ibid*); groups are rotated roughly every fifteen minutes after each topic had been presented. And a period of consolidation after prolonged learning greatly enhances retention (*ibid*); hence why each group is offered feedback by their peers and/or facilitator after each presentation, it is immediate and timely. Furthermore the role of the students in the ALS is to ‘teach’ their peers about the topic they have been assigned. We know that 95% of people learn when the teach someone else (Glasser, 1988, Biggs and Tang, 2011).

The flipped classroom activities are then further brought to life through related themed problem based and field specific learning activities. All lesson plans and PBL resources are updated in line with current evidence as are they made relevant to the students field.

The students’ timetable is clearly outlined with core session’s largely taking place on a Monday, independent/ALS study on Tuesday’s and Wednesday’s and Flipped Classroom/PBL group work on Thursday’s or Friday’s. All of which is aligned to students learning outcomes and module assessment and reflected in an updated module guide.

#### Flipped Classroom and PBL Outcomes

Staff are overall astounded with the quality and standard of the majority of students work. To the extent that the posters and leaflets created by students are on display around the faculty and could have quite easily gone into production and circulated for wider benefit in local Trust areas; this is something the CMT are considering for the future.

*‘I have thoroughly enjoyed this module as it was informative, educational and has made us think about lots of different issues. The eLRP’s, PBL lessons, mock interviews and group presentation have helped us to consolidate our knowledge. I’m really looking forward to my final placement’.*

The use of formative assessment and in encouraging students to practice generic employability skills as part of curricular activities is often an unfulfilled student learning opportunity when developing employability (Pegg, *et al*, 2012). Yet by the time students reached theme four, students within their ALS made some extremely creative, innovative and thought provoking choices. We had ‘songs’ and a ‘rap’ about preceptorship, the mentorship ‘news at ten’, role plays on complex conversations and much more!

Furthermore through the integration of flipped classroom concepts students are enabled to rehearse a repertoire of holistic employability facets including but not exhaustive; communication literacy and IT, team work, problem solving, entrepreneurship, reflective practice, decision making, collaboration, risk taking, self-management and career development (Pegg *et al*, 2012). Moreover, students are empowered to foster their ‘can do approach’ demonstration in a skilful way (through enhancing their knowledge, understanding and application of the health sector) their ability to take-part, contribute and lead with an openness to new ideas and a drive to make things happen (Pegg *et al*, 2012, HEE, 2013).

Students have shown themselves to be creative, confident articulate learners with raised aspirations and elevated self-esteem. Students are actively encouraged to clearly articulate what they have learnt and how it will inform their practice and progression; opportunities not always afforded through such opulent learning methods (Pegg, *et al*, 2012).

*‘My knowledge of clinical performance and accountability has improved. I am more aware of policy and procedures within health care and feel much more prepared for my new role. Thank you to all the staff for your help, support and guidance – you were fab. Oh and by the way I got offered that dream job I was after’ 😊*

As a result the CMT continue to make enhancements to students learning and the support offered during their transitional phase. Although not an exhaustive list additional outputs include the creation of an all new theme three LRP ‘Enhancing Your Employability: The 10 Step Framework’ (see separate poster) and an audit considering the impact flipped classroom, PBL and module teams have on student summative assessment results (see alternative poster submission).

#### References

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