

Aiming for a seamless transition

Aim
The overarching aim of this project is to create a seamless transition where students are supported in their move from university, into employment and the next chapter of their career. The project intends 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 their new employment phase.

The project team, Lisa Abbott (Senior Lecturer) Lindsay Yardley (Senior Academic) and Katie Whitehouse (Careers Consultant) started working together in the summer of 2012, as a new 'transition to registered practitioner' module team formulated to drive forward innovation and change in support of student learning. This led the project team to consider how students' employability is developed to enable them to make a smooth transition to the workplace and have a successful start to an extensive yet hopefully satisfying career ahead.

The project team felt it was crucial to work together as academic and careers staff to enable and empower students to develop holistic aspects of employability; successfully securing project funding through Education Commissioning for Quality to support project objectives throughout 2012-2015.

Project Objectives
The project has three key objectives:

Objective 1 To compose, in collaboration with health and social care and media students as partners, open education resources (OER) that capture students transitional phase.	Objective 2 To appraise the role and function of an employability working group comprising of key stakeholders; including but not exhaustive, students, alumni, newly qualified health and social care staff (NQS), clinical colleagues, local trusts – and those who recruit and support NQS, academic and careers service staff.	Objective 3 To critique the collaborative design and delivery of nearly qualified workshops (NQW) that foster self-development, career planning and the use of emotional intelligence in the workplace alongside the celebration of students' achievements.
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Reality Shock is a term defined by Kramer (1975) that describes the 'gap' between being a student nurse and becoming a qualified nurse and is commonly known as the transitional phase. This transitional experience continues to be prevalent for the students of today in 2014 and beyond (CoDH, 2013, Pearson, 2009, Willis, 2012).

This project aims to bring to life the Universities Corporate Plan (BCU, 2011) and Core Values Framework through a diversity of methods that will engage stakeholders such as students and alumni as co-creators of the curriculum and active partners in the development of their own learning experience. It intends to strengthen partnerships with employers, a central facet of university life (Maguire, 2012) through the development of resources, and the establishment of an employability working group, to prepare students for future employment. Furthermore, it will exploit technology by developing innovative and effective approaches to learning and teaching, which motivate and encourage students to succeed (DH, 2011).

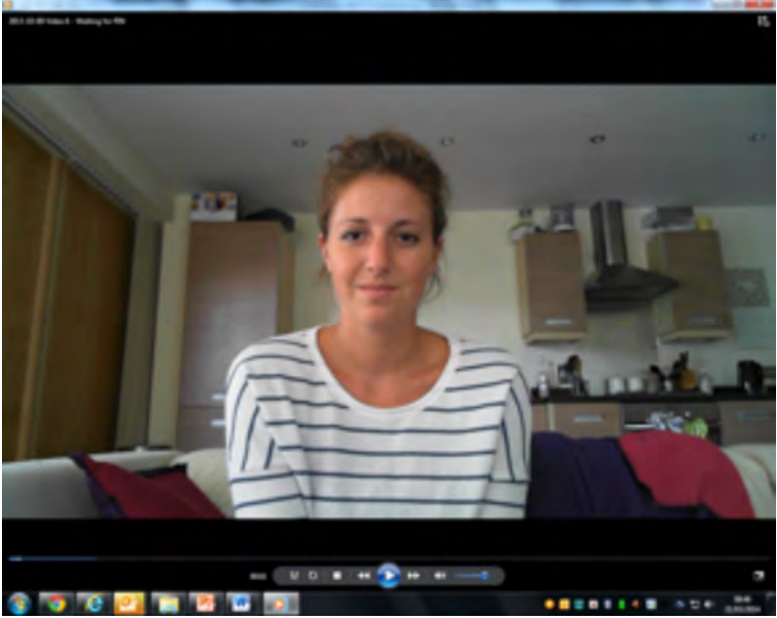


From left: Lisa Abbott, Senior Lecturer; Lindsay Yardley, Senior Academic and Katie Whitehouse, Careers Consultant, Birmingham City University

1. Transitional Video Bloggers
Student nurses have been recruited as partners (representing all fields of nursing) whose role is to video blog during the final three months of their nursing programme and for up to 12 months post qualification. Student partners have been given web cams and provided with technical support to enable them to create a video blog diary of their 'lived experiences' of transition to qualified practice. Student partners and project staff co-created a collaborative agreement, to outline professional commitments and expectations as well as a timeline of likely blogs;



The video blogs are kept within a private site, restricted to project student-staff members only, where students can upload once they have created a blog.



Media students have been recruited as partners through an in-house student jobs scheme called opportUNITY Jobs.

Our media student partners are the team's post-production editors who are helping to co-create footage into short films showcasing a range of experiences throughout the transitional phase. The outcome will be the creation of open education resources (OER's) which aim to assist future students understanding and preparation for what the transitional phase might be like for them.

2. Employability Working Group
Project leads in partnership with key stakeholders (alumni and newly qualified nurses, academic and careers staff, practice staff and local employer representation) established an Employability Working Group early in the 2013-2014 academic year.



Collaboration through group activities has enabled critical exploration of what works as well as what could be improved in relation to students/new graduates transitional support needs. Although work in progress the group is collectively determined to share knowledge, resources and ideas so that together we can better support our clinical professional graduates.

3. Nearly Qualified Workshops
Nearly Qualified Workshops have been integrated into all nursing student's final week at university. The aims of these days are:

To provide a forum of self-reflection and action planning for the future.	To provide insight into future expectations, by inviting trust partners to share their preceptorship programmes and Alumni to share real stories of transition.	To promote the potential for emotional intelligence to create a positive working environment.	To empower students to be satisfied and successful in their careers.	To provide a sense of pride and belonging to the university and the course they have undertaken, celebrating their achievements.
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Outcomes
Transitional Bloggers
The student-staff project team is well-established and on target to have a range of short film/OER's ready for dissemination January 2015.

Employability Working Group
The Employability Working Group meets three times per year and is actively working towards bringing to life the work of Cole and Tibby (2013) *Defining and developing your approach to employability*

Nearly Qualified Workshops
have been successfully delivered to in excess of 1000 nursing students in six cohorts and across all four nursing fields; including military nursing students. Student feedback suggests the aims of the NQW are being met with comments including...

'Very useful, a real sense of what happens after university.'

'Extremely useful to see how the Newly Qualified dealt with transition and how they feel as a Newly Qualified nurse; Helpful info on preceptorship too.'

Project Outputs
Project outputs include the creation of a '10 Step Framework to Enhancing Student Employability', 'A Toolkit for Staff New to Teaching' and successfully applying to host a Higher Education Academy Seminar Series Event called 'Enhancing holistic healthcare employability for successful student transition – how do we measure its success? Held at Birmingham City University, Faculty of Health in 2014

References
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