



Opening up pre-registration education for nurses (the OPEN Project): A partnership approach

Veronica M. Swallow ^{a,*}, Ann Smith ^a, Gillian Shiel ^a, Kathryn Steele ^a, Stephen Farrier ^a, Marie Herring ^b, Margaret Hickman ^a

^a School of Health, Community and Education Studies, Northumbria University (NU), Coach Lane Campus (East), Coach Lane, Newcastle upon Tyne NE7 7XA, United Kingdom

^b Practice Placement Facilitator, City Hospitals Sunderland, United Kingdom

Accepted 30 April 2006

KEYWORDS

Work-based learning;
Health-care assistant;
Pre-registration
education

Summary

Methods: Using a combination of focus groups and questionnaires, data were obtained from 20 health care assistants/pre-registration nursing students taking part in the OPEN Project, their 20 respective clinical mentors, three National Health Service Trust-based facilitators and three University Tutors. The aim was to evaluate development and delivery of the project by:

- Investigating participants' perspectives.
- Facilitating a close and continual link between the evaluation and practical action.

Data were analysed using a combination of Framework Technique and descriptive statistics.

Results: The three main emergent themes were: Personal, Professional and Organisational learning. Through a combination of predominantly work based learning, teaching and assessment methods, students were able to demonstrate how they transformed existing knowledge into a usable tool on which to build further learning, while challenging previous assumptions about practice arising from their health care assistant role.

Familiarity with the workplace while in the dual role of student/health care assistant allowed them to explore practice issues and implement changes while also gaining the credit to step onto year two of the Diploma in Nursing Science/Registered Nurse Programme. The main recommendations related to the issues of role identity for the students and infrastructure development in the Trusts and informed further similar projects.

© 2006 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: veronica.swallow@unn.ac.uk.

Background and introduction

As the context of health care is changing, expansion of the national health service workforce and creation of a new career framework in the United Kingdom is underway (DoH, 2000, 2004) while the nursing profession is responding to the drive to widen access and participation (Chalmers and Bond, 1997; DoH, 1999; UKCC, 2000) by creating more flexible career pathways. The benefits of taking learning to the learners in their own setting and building upon what they already know has been highlighted by Leuddeke (1997) as particularly valuable for those who have traditionally been denied access or advanced standing to higher education (HE) because of personal, socio-economic or institutional constraints. One approach recently developed in the United Kingdom is that of enabling experienced health care assistants with limited educational achievement to fast-track onto pre-registration nursing courses, thus creating career pathways for their progression to nursing qualifications. Such a strategy can improve recruitment and retention and positively benefit individuals, workforce planning and service environments. Modern health care assistants now carry out many tasks that were formerly the province of qualified nurses: this has implications for their training and support (Ramprogus and O'Brien, 2002). However, some health care assistants are frustrated by role limitations. Therefore, a dual approach which supports them to work as competent health care assistants while facilitating their transition onto a pre-registration nursing programme may reduce frustration, enhance career prospects and aid workforce development.

Attitudes to learning are undergoing a dramatic transformation with a shift away from the prevailing view of educational institutions as the principal places of learning towards increasing recognition of the importance of the workplace as a site of learning (Eraut, 1994; Jarvis, 1999; Clarke and Wilcockson, 2001, 2002). Evidence of the importance of rediscovering learning in clinical environments and the need for educational partnership infrastructures between Trusts and Universities has been reported (Birchenall, 1999; Ramprogus and O'Brien, 2002).

In recent studies, Clarke and Wilcockson (2002) analyse the relationship between professional and organisational learning and practice development and identify a model involving three processes:

- using and creating knowledge,
- understanding and practicing patient care and

- those effecting development, in which 'expert thinkers' are engaged in double loop learning to re-conceptualise care rather than just perpetuate existing patterns of care delivery.

Spouse meanwhile (1998) discusses the complexity of practice and practice development and advocates a culture that values and promotes education as an essential and continuous process. It is timely, therefore, that educational approaches which acknowledge and give credit for learning acquired in the workplace and which foster continuing learning through work are emerging in health care.

In order to keep pace with the changing context of work, maximise precious resources and consequently optimise patient care we are increasingly aware of the need to learn about learning at work (Birchenall, 1999, 2000; Swallow et al., 2004). Although professionals continually learn at work through engagement in problems and problem solving, Eraut (2000) claims that we may not contribute a great deal to our professional knowledge base unless time is set aside to deliberate upon the significance of that learning.

The pace of change, however, is so fast that many changes do not have time to become embedded in organisations before they alter again and opportunities to deliberate upon learning are all too rare (Swallow et al., 2004). Nevertheless, the value of workplace learning for the professions has become particularly important for a number of reasons. Boud and Garrick (1999) claim that the shift towards greater recognition of the knowledge that exists in the workplace has significant implications for what is regarded as legitimate knowledge and suggest that the workplace has become a site of learning for two quite different purposes. First, the development of enterprise by contributing to production, effectiveness and innovation and second the development of individuals through contributing to knowledge, skills and the capacity to further their own learning as employees and as citizens.

In this pilot Project, a university, three NHS Trusts and a workforce development confederation (WDC) worked in partnership to develop and implement a process that: recognises and values the implicit learning that has already occurred for experienced health care assistants; fosters ongoing and lifelong learning; enables them to 'step onto' year two of the Diploma in Nursing Science/Registered Nurse Programme at Northumbria University.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/367405>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/367405>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)