

Role emerging placements: building capacity and developing skills of independence in student learning

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The Issues

'Ever-changing working environment'

(Baxter, 2004)



- Employability beyond the NHS
- Skill set required for autonomous practice
- Placement capacity and placement model
- Change in role of placement educator

Role emerging placements: evidence from OT

- Some risks e.g. unrealistic demands from placement mentors (Cooper & Raine, 2007)
- Benefit of developed confidence as '*autonomous practitioners*' (Thew, Hargreaves & Cronin Davies, 2008)
- Researchers concluded that role emerging placements provided '*unique learning opportunities*' but strong emotions were evoked (Dancza et al., 2013)
(NB here the whole cohort of students attended role emerging placements)

SLT evidence

International study of clinical education practices in SLT:

- Traditional models of clinical education persist with the 'acceptance' that these are effective (Sheepway, Lincoln & Togher, 2011)
- Lack of evidence for effectiveness of different models

Role emerging placements at Leeds Met

The SLT team at Leeds Met has run role emerging placements partnership with the West Yorkshire Probation Trust

- Once a week
- Positive evaluations from all parties



The placement

Setting: independent care facilities for adults with learning disabilities complex needs and behaviours

- Role-emerging placement (no SLT role established)
- Identified mentors in the setting
- ‘Long-arm’ supervision by SLT once weekly visit to the setting
- Peer placement: 2 final year students on their final block placement
- 4 days per week for 6 weeks

The data

Aim: to explore the student experience.

- Qualitative data
 - Pre and post placement interviews with the 2 students
 - Pre and post questionnaires with the Placement Mentors in the setting
- + Post placement evaluation from the Placement Educator

Pre-placement feelings

*Apprehensive... lack of
constant supervision (S1 pre)*



*A bit exciting... a bit of a
challenge (S2 pre)*



How did the placement model and style of supervision support the students' learning?

Facilitated independence

Client chosen for therapy was unsuitable
(The placement educator) *“didn’t say anything to them she wanted to let us... find our own way and you know be a bit more autonomous and say ‘that’s not really feasible’ “*

(S2 post)

Facilitated independence

Students recommended use of Makaton

‘oh well the problem we have with Makaton is if we teach it to the service users they often just ask for things they want all the time’

(S1 quoting care worker)



“it was a good thing... to deal with that as opposed to being with a supervisor who would sort of step in at that point” (S1 post)

Facilitated application of learning

*“We... did a presentation at the end of all the different techniques that you would use in a setting like that which... we’d already been taught but **we were kind of teaching ourselves through it**” (S2 post)*

Moved from desire for strict guidance
to initiating within the placement

(I want them to) *“tell us exactly what they’re expecting and what they want from us”* (S2 pre)

“it was more up to us to make up our own case load... and decide things that we could do rather than what they wanted us to do” (S2 post)

“we never really needed anything from her (one of the placement mentors). We never really asked.”
(S2 post)

Responsive educator

“the support (from the SLT educator) was brilliant. I could... email her any time and she’d get back to me straight away we met once a week and went through the tasks and I felt... that was enough if I had any questions she would put me back on track” (S1 post)

Placement Educator style and inhibition of development

(We will need to) *“reflect on each other’s performance a bit more than perhaps in the past where we’ve always been a bit scared to do so whenever there’s a speech therapist there to lead you on”* (S2 pre)

The students gained *“an insider view of being in those services... on Speech and Language therapy placements where you are with a speech therapist at all times I think you can often... go in provide a recommendation and leave”* (S1 post)

Felt welcomed and valued

*“it felt really different from any other placement where you’re.. more of a **burden** you feel like you know they’re doing you a favour but it really felt like we were doing them a favour in this placement”* (S2 post)

The students’ suggestions were implemented

“The training they provided to managers was very good and we have introduced the tools they left into all services” (Placement mentor)

The placement design and model of supervision supported development

The experience of independence with a supportive peer and educator facilitated great developments in

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Placement needs to be set up with care

Good communication between all parties is essential

Placement tasks need to be suitable

Not suitable for all students?

Post placement feelings

“whenever I started it I didn’t feel like I was at all ready to be an independent therapist” (S2 post)

“we were actually very independent by the end of it and I do feel like I could go into a setting like that and I would love it” (S2 post)

“was a really fantastic experience... and I think the majority of that was the independence that I was given in the placement” (S1 post)

References

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