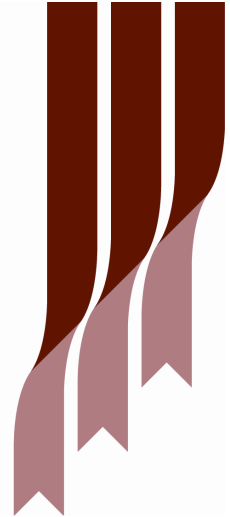


SCOTTISH INSTITUTE
FOR EXCELLENCE IN
SOCIAL WORK EDUCATION



INTEGRATED ASSESSMENT

Involvement of users and carers

Enquiry and Action Learning –
Students Considering the Perspectives
of Service Users And Carers

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Aims of the Enquiry and Action Learning Sequence

The sequence aimed to develop a foundation understanding of the experience and views of service users and carers amongst students and for them to gather feedback from service users and carers on their practice.

An outline of the process

The EAL sequence is the second sequence for first year undergraduate students on a BA (Hons) in Social Work Course. The sequence involves a four week cycle of learning. Four questions were set for exploration, aided by reading, discussion and a small group meeting with a briefed service user or carer. The questions covered the involvement of the service user or carer with social workers, their views on social workers, what they would like from social workers and what social workers can learn from these findings. Service users and carers gave written feedback to the student group on their presentation at the meeting. The following outlines the process:

- An introductory group session in groups of nine with a tutor
- Preparation for visits in groups of three
- Reading from a prepared list of publications
- The visit
- Groups of nine prepare a presentation
- Presentations to another group

Method of evaluation

A questionnaire was sent by E-mail to all participating students. It covered aspects of preparation in the task, learning from the visit and the process as a whole and further comments or suggestions for change. 15 of the cohort of 37 responded. The findings from them provide a good sense of the student response whilst not encompassing a full evaluation.

Findings

The preparation of students for the learning cycle

Students all felt well prepared, often because they had already worked through an Enquiry and action learning sequence and generally appreciated the reading although some felt that there were failures in the organisation.

Sample comments:

- yes, working as a team....based on lessons learned from the first EAL*
- yes ample information after looking at the readings*
- Yes, had to cope with last minute changes*

The Reading Material

In this sequence the reading material was given to students after visits and some students noted that they found this helpful. Overall most students who made comments appreciated the reading but some (4) found it hard

Sample comments:
this added understanding and weight to issues that were discussed
I feel like we get inundated with further reading and I didn't have a chance to read half of it

The process of the meeting with a service user and learning gained

This process created many insights for students. They felt that little should be changed about the process of visiting.

Sample comments on new learning:
Before I interviewed the service user, I did not take into account the emotional impact that some situations may have on me as a practitioner

We are benefiting from service users' experiences

empowering the service user

Sample comments on the gains of the visits themselves:

relating theory to practice

meeting a real service user in a safe environment

insight into.... walk into the home of a stranger and asking personal questions

General comments and views regarding the future use of this exercise

There was clear agreement that this learning sequence should continue; in general the recommendations from those who responded suggested more time should be spent in preparation and in practice and less time spent on reading. It appeared that carrying out the reading after the visit had worked well for students.

Concluding comments

This exercise in enquiry and action learning took as its central focus the exploration of the views of service users and carers by students at the start of social work training. We chose to gather the opinions of students both of the process and of the learning gained. From this small scale evaluation, it appears that this form and subject of

learning should be repeated. Further work should be carried out to gather service user and carer views on the process to develop preparation for a further sequence; however at this time it was felt that service users and carers had already been asked for their views on the practice of students who had visited and a further approach at this time appeared inappropriate.

Appendix 1

The reading list provided to students was as follows:

- Anfilogoff, S (2003) *Research into Practice* Community Care November 2003
p 50
- Beresford, P (2000) *Service Users' Knowledge and Social Work Theory: Conflict or Collaboration?* BJSW 30 pp 489-503
- Beresford, P and Evans, C. *Research and Empowerment* (1999) BJSW 29 pp 671-677
- Boylan J, Dalrymple J and Ing, P (2000) *Let's do it! Advocacy, young people and social worker education* Social Work Education 19 (6) pp 553–563
- Byers C and Belcher A (2003) '*Learning from Experience*' Professional Social Work June 2003 pp16-17
- Crawford, A (2003) '*Voices of Experience*' Community Care February 20-26 pp 36-37
- Curran, T (1997) '*Power, Participation and Post Modernism: User and Practitioner Participation in Mental Health Education*' Social Work Education 16 (3) pp21-36
- Curran, T, Evans, C and Ashworth, S (1996) '*Points of View*' Community Care October 21 1996 pp 28-29
- Davies, M (ed) (2002) *The Blackwell Companion to Social Work* Oxford: Blackwell
*chapter 5: Service Users' Perspectives
- Edwards, C (2003) '*The Involvement of Service Users in the Assessment of Diploma in Social Work Students on Practice Placements*' Social Work Education 22 (4) pp 341-349
- Kelmshall, H and Littlechild (eds) (2000) *User Involvement and Participation in Social Care Informing Practice* Jessica Kingsley London
- Leason, K (2004) '*Worth the hassle?*' Community Care, January 29 – February 4 2004, pp 30-31
- Levin, E (2004) '*SCIE Resource Guide No 2: Involving Service Users and Carers in Social Work Education*' London: Social Care Institute for Excellence
- Manthorpe, J (2000) *Developing carers contributions to social work training* Social Work Education 19 (1) pp19-27
- Pickering, I and Mullender, A (1991) '*Learning Together*' Issues in Social Work Education 11(1) pp 92-100

Reynolds, J et al (2003) *The Managing Care Reader* London: Routledge *chapter 3: Involving Service Users in Management: Citizenship, access and support

Shaw, I and Lishman, J (eds) (1999) *Evaluation and Social Work Practice* London, Sage

Shennan, G (1998) *Are we asking the experts? Practice Teachers' use of client views in assessing client competence* *Social Work Education* 17 (4) pp 407-417

Tew, J, Gell, C and Foster, S (2004) *Learning from Experience: Involving Service Users and Carers in Mental Health Education and Training* HEA/NIMHE/Trent Workforce Development Confederation