

Teaching Excellence Case Study

Peer narratives for threshold concepts

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Module: 131OT: Occupational Therapy Process for Practice

Student Level: Undergraduate (Level 4)



LINKS TO EDUCATION STRATEGY PILLARS

- Embedded employability
- Community contribution and responsibility
- Research inspired teaching

AIMS

To enhance students' **employability** and readiness for **practical placements**, a **Peer Assisted Learning (PAL)** scheme was set up. Level 4 students were able to learn from the experiences of Level 6 students, a process which supported their **understanding of a threshold concept**: namely, Occupational Therapy (OT) models of practice.

ACTIONS

The course team wanted to find an engaging way of helping students to understand OT models of practice. There was a realisation that if students could **see the models in action**, they would be more likely to grasp them initially, and then could read up on the theory in due course.

To achieve this, **Level 6 students were asked to contribute lectures** to the module, in which they reflected on practical placements they had undertaken and, in so doing, engaged with the models of practice.

These students delivered lectures to the Level 4 cohort to **share their experiences**. Those who were approached to deliver a lecture were willing to do so as they well understood the benefits of CPD and its importance for employability. Students were also supported by the course team in the preparation of their lectures.

IMPACT

The PAL scheme was an effective way of making a tricky topic (i.e. the OT models) more **tangible- and relevant-** to Level 4 students. The scheme also had a **positive impact on employability** for all involved, as students had the chance to learn from peers or share their own experiences.

Based on the success of this innovation, the OT course team are now keen to **replicate the PAL scheme** on other modules.

STUDENT FEEDBACK

- “[The Level 6 student’s] presentation helped understand models better. Also gave a better concept of how to practice it on placement.”
- “I really enjoyed it. Was nice to hear from OT students. It gives me more confidence.”
- “I found it really useful to hear how students have used these models in their practice on placement because it made it easier to understand”.



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TOP TIPS

- **Peer Assisted Learning** schemes can enable students to learn from each other about their **practical workplace experiences**.
- Students who are at a later stage of a given course, as well as graduates, are well placed to **inspire those at earlier stages**, as well as passing on practical advice. Doing so also helps them to reflect on how far they have come since starting the course.
- For course teams, it may be difficult to “let go” when running a PAL scheme- but your input will still be needed! To check **and consolidate what students have learned** from their peers, you can provide supporting activities (e.g. seminars) and learning materials.