

Assessing practice learning in child and adolescent mental health

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Course details	
Course title	Higher Specialist/Advanced Post Qualifying Award (Children and Young People their Families and Carers)
Level	Postgraduate
Year	3 or 4
Module title	N/A
Discipline/Subject areas	Social work

Activity details (total approx. 500 words)	
What I did	This case study describes how a practice assessment tool was developed and introduced for further and advanced post qualifying social work courses in child and adolescent mental health at Anglia Ruskin University.
Why I did it	<p><i>Every Child Matters</i> (2003) <i>The Children's National Service Framework</i> (2004) the <i>Children Act</i> (2004) and the <i>Common Assessment Framework</i> (2006) all emphasise the importance of training in inter-personal skills and practice learning in child and adolescent mental health care. Child and adolescent mental health is currently receiving an unprecedented priority in terms of national policy initiatives. This is exemplified in <i>The Children's National Service Framework</i> (2004) and the recommended training in inter-personal skills and child and adolescent mental health care for all professionals implied in <i>Every Child Matters</i> (2003) and the <i>Children Act</i> (2004).</p> <p>Amongst other things, the tool was intended for use in a new interprofessional MSc/ Postgraduate Diploma pathway in child and adolescent mental health developed in the Faculty of Health and Social Care, Anglia Ruskin University and validated as a GSCC approved pqsw specialist and advanced award for children, young people their families and carers.</p>
What I wanted to achieve	The aim was to develop a useful tool that offers social workers a structured, evidence-based learning experience to improve practice with troubled young people.
A short description of what I did	Prior to a re-validation of the existing advanced studies programme in child and adolescent mental health, a small team was convened to re-examine existing practice assessment methods and design an improved tool. University and practitioner staff from social work and nursing studies collaborated to design practice learning outcomes based on social work

	and nursing professional competencies, GSCC code of conduct, QAA descriptors and subject benchmark statements and the DfES common core of skills.
What worked well	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working with colleagues from health services who shared a common understanding of child and adolescent mental health • Accessing the relevant data and resources with which to design the practice learning document • Producing a systematic, clear practice learning document that blends with the theoretical content of the course
Problems and/or issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trying to match the existing programme learning outcomes with new learning outcomes without changing the course • Trying to ensure compatibility between the different elements informing the content of the practice learning • Designing a tool that could be used across a wide variety of practice locations and contexts
What students thought about it	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students find the practice learning document useful • Students appreciate the flexibility built in to the learning outcomes to enable them to be achieved in a variety of work contexts
Key messages	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of engaging all stakeholders in collaborative activity • Recognising that child and adolescent mental health is still a neglected practice area for social workers • Acknowledging that the social work role in child and adolescent mental health is critical
Related documents or links	<p>Details of the course can be viewed at : http://www.anglia.ac.uk/ruskin/en/home/prospectus/pgpt/advanced_child_mh.html</p> <p>The practice assessment document is also available as a downloadable word document.</p>
Any other comments	