



# Embedding Practice Based, Interprofessional Education into the Curriculum

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## Origins of the project

Bournemouth University was successful in bidding for a major NHS grant into researching successful practice focused regional interprofessional education (RIPE). This approach incorporated the use of continuous quality improvement to improve services for clients. The learning from RIPE demonstrated that the approach used was a successful tool in facilitating interprofessional education and service developments. We then looked at ways this learning could be incorporated into mainstream education.

## Purpose

The purpose was to offer a unit of learning around interprofessional education that was accessible to any health or social care discipline. It was anticipated that in the first instance it would be accessed by undergraduate nursing and social work students. We felt that this would considerably enhance the learning opportunities for students. It would better equip them to meet the increasing demands for practitioners to be able to work well Interprofessionally and give them practical experience of using a particular approach to improve services.

## Desired Outcomes

It is hoped that level 2 nursing students, and level 3 social work students will commence this unit starting October 2002. Their experience will be given 20 academic credits, and contribute to their final qualification.

## Preparation and support

The support and investment from line managers in both the nursing and health and community development team has been essential in getting this project off the ground. The whole process can be very time consuming and allowance has had to be given for this. The other members of the RIPE team have also been a large source of support and information, and we have been able to learn from each other's successes and difficulties. Without the initial cash outlay for the RIPE project, I am doubtful that the project would have got off the ground.

## Development issues

Problem areas -time – freeing up people so that they can participate at all levels. It is also difficult to get the practice base managers and some practitioners linked to the significance and relevance of the work. The clash of different course structures makes it very hard to get common practice Embedding Practice Based, Interprofessional Education into the Curriculum experience. There also has to be some sort of in-built mechanism for training the practice teachers/mentors in the approach, so that they feel competent to assess in this area.

## Course of action

The unit is very much in the planning stage. It is good to see it in the curriculum for the future, but there are many problems that need to be ironed out – especially in terms of setting up suitable placements.

## Review/hindsight

It is pleasing to see that the pilot projects have all had positive outcomes. It is also very positive that there appears to be some investment from the department in pursuing matters further. It is clear, on reflection, that project such as this would be easier to incorporate into a postgraduate framework, where students are often more able to be flexible, and are frequently already in practice.

However, I feel it is important that this type of work is addressed as early as possible in the students career. It can help reduce the development of stereotypes, and establish positive approaches to interprofessional working early on. I feel it would have been better to have invested more time and effort in establishing a positive placement framework, before adding the unit as such to the curriculum.

## What next?

Over the next year I hope to work more with colleagues in practice to establish a supportive framework for students. This will include the setting up, managing and assessment of interprofessional placements. This is essential if the real value of the approach is to be built upon. The classroom learning is very limited in its value. It is the practical experience that consolidates future professional behavior and attitudes.

The initial funding for this project has now expired, and future developments will very much depend on how far the university feels able to commit to the project in terms of staffing levels.

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