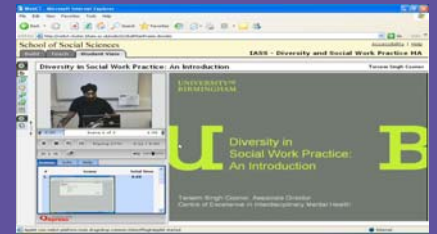




Diversity in Social Work Practice

Talking About... Learning & Teaching: Case Study 004



University of Birmingham

Start Date: January 2008

Students: 1st year undergraduate (Level C)

Type: Campus/local community

Discipline: Social Work

Scope: Whole module

Technology: WebCT, Ech360, Adobe Flash CS3, video camera

No. of students affected: 81

Approach: Enquiry-based learning, blended learning, group work, reflection, workbook

Learning Environment: mini-lecture, e-learning, independent learning, group work

Initial Funding: N/A

Initiative Introduction: Within a programme of study

Impact: adopted by department

Design Team: Tarsem Singh Cooner (Associate Director, CEIMH)

www.ceimh.bham.ac.uk

Introduction

A mixture of face-to-face and online lectures (using the Echo360 lecture capture system), a Workbook, online video case studies and community-based EBL group work activities (27 groups of 3) were used in this blended learning design. The aim of the module was to provide students with opportunities to reframe and reinterpret existing knowledge, values and beliefs to assess the impact these may have on their professional practice when working with diverse communities.

Learning Design

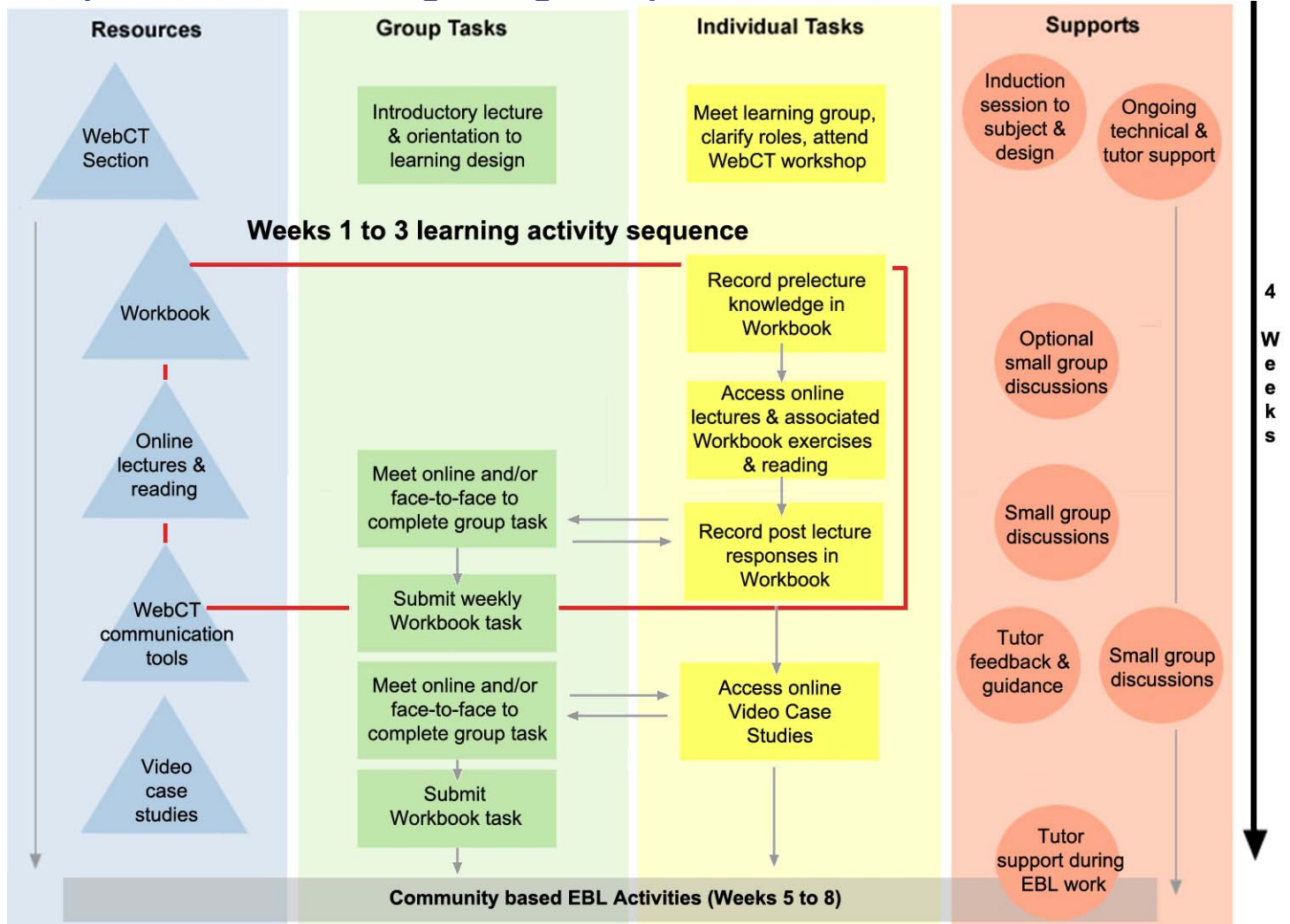
The aim of the learning design in weeks 1 to 4 was to prepare students with the foundation knowledge and skills required to undertake community-based EBL activities in weeks 5 to 8. During the first morning lecture students were allocated into randomly preselected learning groups and introduced to the learning design, online resources and expectations around student roles. Following this, the first weekly Workbook exercise was explained and demonstrated by the tutor. The Workbook guided this earlier period of learning and students were given the opportunity to ask questions, raise concerns and seek clarification. A WebCT workshop was offered in the afternoon, attendance was voluntary.

The workbook exercises for the first 3 weeks were based around four consistent steps to track and develop learning whilst allowing students to develop the skills of professional reflection. The first step required students to answer questions prior to accessing online lectures to surface and record existing knowledge. The second step involved accessing an online Ech360 lecture (length generally no longer than 15 minutes) that introduced important topics along with further recommended reading. The third step required students (either during or after the online lecture) to record their responses (in the Workbook) to the same questions posed in step one. The purpose was to enable reflection on pre and post lecture learning. The fourth step required student groups to complete weekly exercises where they got together (physically and/or virtually) to create and submit a 500-word summary question outlined in the Workbook. The question was worded to encourage students to use their earlier (individual) written responses to discuss, share, explore and collectively reflect on their ongoing learning and potential impact on practice. Once submitted, the tutor responded to each summary within 48 hours to guide further learning. In Week 4, students accessed three online video case studies. These illustrated examples of personal, cultural and structural processes that can prevent diverse communities from gaining equality of access to social care services. This stage provided students with opportunities to apply earlier learning and record their responses to questions during (reflection-in-action) and after (reflection-on-action) engaging with the case studies. The final group summary question for this exercise had a one thousand-word limit.

Summary

This learning design prepared students to undertake community-based EBL activities that seemed to promote self-reflection and reflection with others. The design appeared to overcome obstacles to effective learning in large groups through flexibility for learning, engaging exercises and context-specific activities students appeared to relate to both personally and professionally.

Temporal Plan: Learning Design Sequence



Student Learning Outcomes

- Demonstrate an understanding of how concepts of diversity and equality relate to the social work task.
- Demonstrate awareness of diversity key facts and their impact on access to social care services.
- Show an awareness of legislation related to issues of equality and diversity in British society.
- Explain how concepts of discrimination and oppression impact on access to UK social care services.
- Demonstrate how Personal, Cultural and Structural factors can deny equality of access to social care services for diverse communities through the processes discrimination and oppression.
- Demonstrate the skills and knowledge required to reflect in and on practice.

Contact Information

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Further Information Available: Cooner, T.S. (2010) 'Creating opportunities for students in large cohorts to reflect in and on practice: Lessons learnt from a formative evaluation of students' experiences of a technology-enhanced blended learning design', *British Journal of Educational Technology* 41(2) p. 271-286.

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