



Mental Health Collaborative Learning Initiative

Colin Burbridge

Jerry Tew



Talking About... Learning & Teaching: Case Study 010

University of Birmingham

Start Date: 2006

Students: 1st & 2nd year undergraduate, 1st & 2nd year postgraduate

Scope: 7-Day Interdisciplinary Learning Initiative

Approach: Enquiry-Based Learning (EBL); Blended Learning

Technology: Wiki (PBWorks), Final Cut Pro, University UCMS

Type: Enquiry-based Blended Learning

Disciplines: Social Work, and Nursing

Cohort Size: 30 - 60

Initial Funding: Centre of Excellence in Interdisciplinary Mental Health

Initiative Introduction: Within two professional programmes of study

Impact: adopted across two Colleges

Design Team: Tarsem S. Cooner, Chris Wagstaff, Dr Jerry Tew, 9 Service Users, 3 Carers and 5 Mental Health practitioners.

Introduction

It is recognised that the delivery of interdisciplinary services provide the most effective outcomes for mental health service users and carers (MHSUC). However, a lack of teaching space, timetabling difficulties, differing curriculum requirements etc can prevent qualifying social and health care students from learning together with MHSUC to develop the skills and knowledge required for effective interdisciplinary post-qualification practice. The aim of this design was to creatively overcome issues of time and space and to embed active MHSUC engagement with students. The objective of the initiative was to promote effective interdisciplinary learning. Initially the Learning Initiative was with Nursing and Social Work students, however it is planned to incorporate Clinical Psychology students and Senior House Officer Medics in the near future.

Learning Design

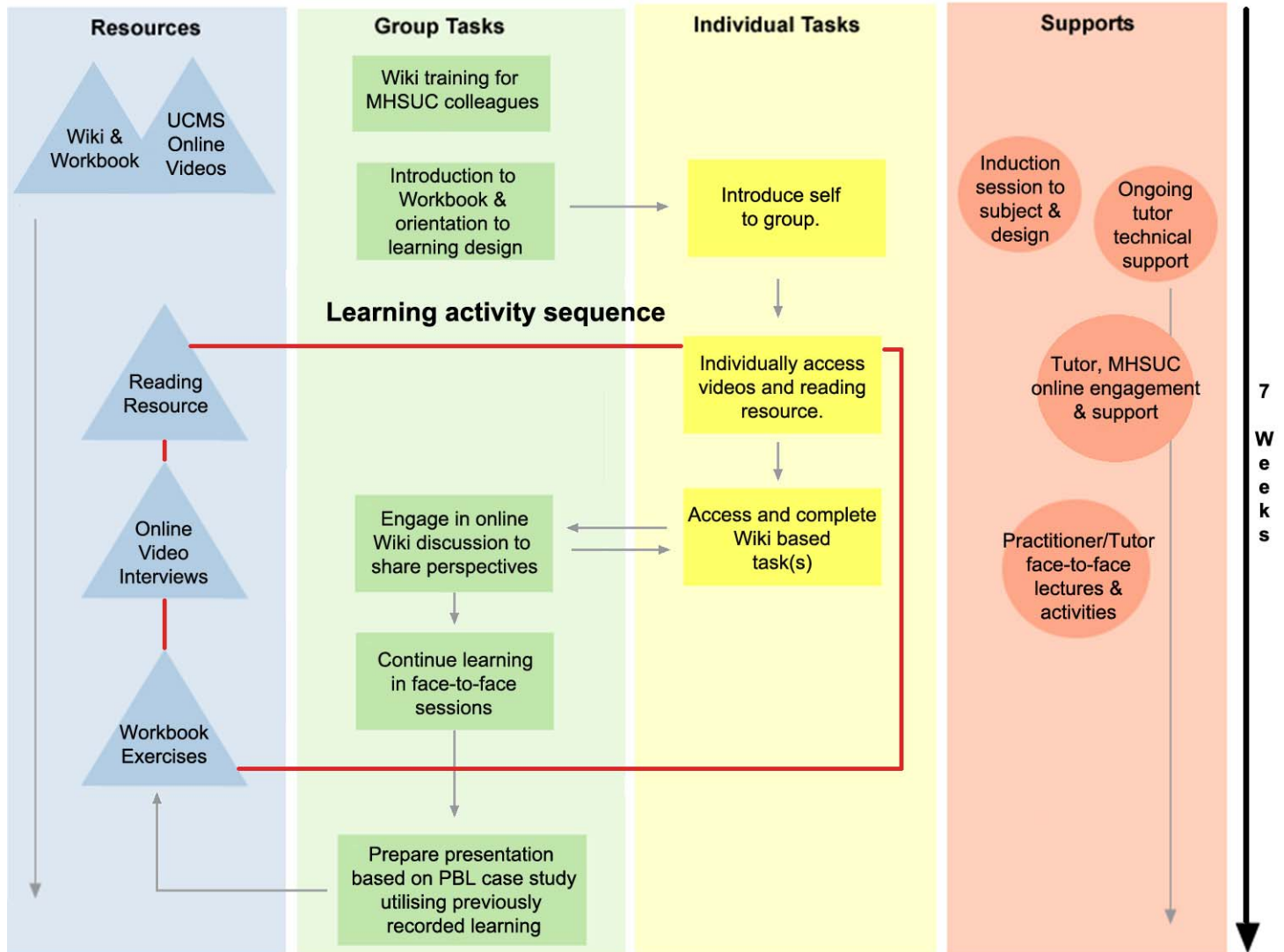
Originally 3 academics, 5 professionals, 9 service users and 3 carers got together to create an enquiry-based blended learning design. The aims were to ensure students could explore (through active dialogue) issues such as MHSUC experiences of services and the roles, values and theoretical perspectives of interdisciplinary working. One major objective was to raise awareness of the importance of engaging in career-long interdisciplinary dialogue to improve the delivery of mental health services.

Prior to the face-to-face sessions mixed groups of 5/6 students including MHSUCs were created. A few weeks before the face-to-face sessions students were provided with a Workbook and introduction to a Wiki and video based resources. These outlined the tasks students had to engage in, prior to and during, the face-to-face sessions. These tasks required the groups to access different theoretical perspectives around issues of Mental Distress. Several prominent individuals were videoed by MHSUC exploring issues such as the Causes or Contributory Factors, Finding Meaning, and Promoting Recovery around mental distress. In their interdisciplinary online groups the aim was to ensure students had opportunities to develop new knowledge and insights by engaging in dialogue with each other and the MHSUC. The learning from these online activities was built on in the face-to-face sessions through both lectures and small group discussions. The final part of the learning design required the groups to work on a problem-based case study. They were given the choice to use the Wiki and/or face-to-face sessions to provide an interdisciplinary response to the issues posed. Again, MHSUC participation in this was central to the learning process. The groups presented their responses to the problem-based case study via a presentation on the last day of the face-to-face activities.

Summary

The flexibility offered by the learning design enabled students, MHSUC and academics to engage in learning activities mostly at a time and place suitable for them. The design helped to overcome some of the barriers that had previously prevented effective opportunities for interdisciplinary education. Having the MHSUC's involved in the planning, design and delivery of this sequence of learning seemed to have a profoundly positive impact on the learner's experiences.

Temporal Plan: Learning Design Sequence



Student Learning Outcomes

- Develop skills to engage in interdisciplinary dialogue to improve mental health services.
- Become aware of the roles, values and theoretical perspectives of allied mental health disciplines and how they can promote the delivery of interdisciplinary services.
- Demonstrate an understanding of mental health service user and carer perspectives.
- Be able to articulate the causes or contributory factors, finding meaning, and promoting recovery around issues of mental distress based on the perspectives presented.

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Series Created by Danielle Hinton, College of Social Sciences, University of Birmingham. Last updated: Monday, June 07, 2010

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