A win-win situation: Service Learning Activities (SLA)

Andrew Saint and Rosy Green

Strengthening partnerships between practice sites and universities
The impact of mass Education

Undergraduates enrolled in the BN UTAS
- 2005 - 625
- 2010- 1,389

Clinical agencies are under pressure to provide practice placements for ever increasing numbers of students

- Over 150 Practice sites across Tasmania and NSW
Community and mental health nursing practice

- Takes place in a wide range of health care settings, industries, agencies and sectors

- Serves populations from diverse backgrounds, lifestyles, ages, cultures and locations

- Focuses on treating, maintaining, promoting and facilitating health and wellbeing in clients and their families
The challenge lies in addressing complexities in health and wellbeing rather than focusing on the acuity of disease.
Partnerships

- The establishment and maintenance of supportive relationships with agencies is vital to sustain and enrich the student learning experience.

- In utilising the service-learning Assessment task (SLA) all participants are partners and all stand to gain.

- Reciprocity—clinical staff, students and lecturers collaborative to achieve a goal and participate as both learner and teacher.
The Service Learning Activity

- A course based, credit bearing educational experience in which students:
  - Participate in an organised service activity that meets identified community needs
  - Reflect on the activity in such a way as to gain further understanding of the course content, a broader application of the discipline and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility

The Concept

John Dewey is credited with the concept. He considered teaching strategies connecting students to the realities existent within society to be essential.

Experiential learning, reflection and reciprocal learning were considered the requisite elements separating this from other more rote forms of learning.

By addressing contemporary social concerns student learning becomes active rather than passive and this, along with reflection, promotes understanding of phenomena rather than merely gaining knowledge


Definition

- ‘A formalised, reciprocal learning experience that addresses student learning objectives by connecting them simultaneously with practice agency experience’

SLAs encourage students to:

- Learn actively in real life situations
- Draw on life experiences
- Work collaboratively and creatively
- Engage in supported decision making
- Addressing contemporary social concerns
- Envisage and enact change

Steps to completing an SLA

- Identify a need in your agency and think of a project or intervention you could contribute. Discuss this with your preceptors.

- Email a short proposal to your online tutor within MyLO mail.

- Collaborate with your preceptors and tutor to create your SLA and to ensure you are making a useful contribution to the agency.

- Complete your SLA under the direct supervision of your preceptors and in discussion with your online tutor. 20 hours of prac time can be allocated to this task.

- Write a 1000 word report on the process of investigating, collaborating, creating and reflecting on your product.

Examples of SLAs

The products created are limited only by the imagination of the student and the parameters of the agency.

In three years we have seen a wide array of assessment tasks including brochures, DVDs, policy manuals, presentations, focus groups, activities, therapies, information booklets, journalistic narratives and posters.

The process is rewarding and engaging for all the partners involved.
Blood Glucose Monitoring
Regular testing and recording of your blood glucose can reinforce healthy lifestyle choices as well as inform you of your response to other choices and influences.

Regular testing of blood glucose levels will assist you to:
- Develop confidence in looking after your diabetes
- Better understand the relationship between blood glucose levels and exercise, food, travel, illness, medications and stress.
- Know instantly if your blood glucose levels are outside normal ranges, allowing you to make decisions regarding treatment and seeking medical advice.
- Recognise when to seek advice from healthcare providers, regarding attendance in management including adjustment to insulin, tablets, meal planning and when optimal blood glucose levels are not being maintained.

Concluded May 2010
By Nursing Student

Symptoms of Hyperglycaemia (high blood glucose levels)
Symptoms of Hypoglycaemia (low blood glucose levels)

Normal levels
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>High</th>
<th>Low</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4mmol/L before meals</td>
<td>4mmol/L after meals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| Ideal levels
| High | Low |
| 6-7mmol/L before meals | Up to 7mmol/L after meals |
| Moderate levels
| High | Low |
| 8-9mmol/L before meals | Up to 11mmol/L after meals |
| Above target levels
| High | Low |
| More than 11mmol/L before meals | Up to 11mmol/L after meals |

This table can only be considered as a guide. It is important to consult with your medical or diabetes educator to determine blood glucose levels that are safe and correct range for you. It is important to keep your blood glucose levels within ideal ranges to prevent hyperglycaemia, hypoglycaemia and other health problems.

Contact Information
3rd Year Course Co-ordinator
Rosy Green - 0408 121 352
Correctional Health Services
Sharon Halton – 6216 8236
My Learning Online (MyLO)
https://mylo.utas.edu.au
Tasmanian Prison Service
Service Learning Activity:

H Ridge 101 a university students were completing a mental health placement in the Sydney Hospital. What do they need to know?

Presented by: Senior Nurse

Discussing strategies

LIFE STORY WORK

REMINISCENCE

ONE-ON-ONE INTERACTION IN DEMENTIA CARE
My journey
as a young woman
with breast cancer.
Youth Week is an annual celebration of the youth of Australia, held from the 10th to the 18th of April, and focuses on people aged 15 to 25 years. Youth Week promotes the value and importance of our youth, enabling the whole community to acknowledge and appreciate their contributions to our society.

For more information visit the website.

www.youthweek.nid.gov.com
Benefits for students

- Deep transformational learning - high order thinking
- Supported decision making - feedback & feed-forward
- Satisfaction in creating tangible, useful contributions
- Enhanced communication & reflection on practice
- Insight and involvement with community issues
- Promotion of self esteem and confidence
- Awareness of the broader professional role

Benefits for Agencies

- Provides a focus and enhances time on placement
- Encourages and motivates students
- Increases student awareness and sense of belonging
- Attracts potential future staff
- Creates outcomes of value to the agency
- Fosters a sense of achievement and collaboration
- Improves cohesion and understanding between the University and Industry
Benefits for universities

- Engages the student with assessment items
- Links student closely to learning outcomes
- Aligns graduate attributes with learning objectives
- Reduces opportunities for plagiarism
- Improves cohesion between Industry and University
- Builds and maintains practice sites
- Furthers student confidence and competence
- Promotes community engagement & research
- Provides a refreshing assessment task to mark!

Students feel greatly involved in working toward real rather than purely theoretical ends, and perhaps for the first time, fully appreciate how they can apply their skills within a broader community context.
Student quotes

- “The SLA has had a transforming and freeing effect on my practice as a student nurse”

- “I really wanted to do this task as it was so intriguing and interesting”

- “This process has been an exciting but challenging time—it enabled me to contribute to the team and met a need that can benefit the client at a time that is most difficult”

- “The experience made me realise that reflection and a deeper understanding of the ill person brings out the true caring attributes of a nurse”