Developing nursing practice through Work Based Learning

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Aim
To evaluate an HIV work based learning (WBL) module with regard to the development of nursing skills and practice.

Background
The evolving needs of HIV patients requires ongoing specialist HIV nurse training¹. This presents both workplace and financial challenges to deliver. To address local educational needs, a tailored HIV work based learning module was developed for nurses based on Level 3 skills of the National HIV Nursing Competencies².

WBL is coined as ‘Learning for work, learning at work and learning through work’³ and is part of a governmental drive to provide value for money training that meets the educational needs of both the practitioner and the service⁴.

In 2014, a seven month 20 credit level 6 module was co-designed by the University of Brighton and senior HIV nurses at Brighton and Sussex University Hospital Trust.

Methods
Five students who successfully completed the WBL module in 2015 shared personal reflections of their overall experience. A thematic analysis was undertaken comparing the learner’s initial self-assessment and their final reflective summary.

Changes in service delivery were then collated. In addition, a survey on staff learning experience and development was undertaken using an online service.

Results
The thematic analysis pre and post course is shown in Figure 1 and 2 and demonstrates that students were able to build on their strengths and were realistic about potential barriers.

There were a number of significant changes in nursing care delivery as a result of the chosen learning outcomes from the five students of the 2015 cohort (See Figure 3).

The staff survey identified that 80% of respondents felt the WBL module contributed to patient care outcomes during emergencies.

The two learning outcomes chosen by the student aligned with service audit or evaluation and aimed to change an area of practice or focus on personal or professional development.

Conclusion
This small-scale evaluation has demonstrated that a bespoke WBL module has increased HIV specialist nursing skills and made a contribution to improving patient care through nurse initiated changes in practice. Ensuring mentor support and appropriate learning environments need to be considered for the success of future cohorts.

References

Special thanks to the 2015 cohort WBL students for sharing their experiences

University of Brighton 2015

External Examiner feedback

“It is recognised that post-registration studies can be challenging for those holding significant workplace responsibilities. The additional challenge of producing independent projects as in this case is not to be underestimated and as such the students and team are to be congratulated on the quality of work presented. Students had provided excellent evidence of achievement via comprehensive and divergent portfolio entries. The application of learning to practice was explicit in all cases with their study activity directly inspired by and related to enhancing practice performance.”