A community outreach approach to promoting student engagement in healthcare contexts

Faculty of Health & Academic Language and Learning Services

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Critical Intersections: the 12th Biennial Conference of the Association for Academic Language and Learning, University of Wollongong 25-27th November 2015
1. Improve confidence & preparedness for workplace placements

2. Enhance academic experience

3. Build staff confidence & capabilities in relation to assisting CALD students with their studies
Connections for Learning Program framework

Language & Literacy

Academic

Professional

Socio-cultural

Student needs

Community Outreach

Workplace Integration

Staff Development

Learning to do

Learning to know

Learning to live together

Learning to be

(Delors, 1996; Carneiro & Draxler, 2008)
Design principles

Intercultural education cannot be just a simple “add on” to regular curriculum.

- Workplace Integration
  - Role Plays
  - At-risk program

- Community Outreach
  - Healthcare volunteering

- Language & Literacy
  - Write Workshops
  - PG Writing Program
  - At-risk program

- Staff development
  - Mentoring for inclusive teaching
Volunteering in Healthcare

- Evidence-based  
  - Identified student needs  
- Small start  
  - Relationship building  
- Weeks 1 & 2 Info Sessions  
- 1 hour/week Drop In and dedicated email for queries

(Gupta, McEniery & Creyton, 2013)

(Nash, 2011)
## Volunteering in Healthcare

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Year</th>
<th>Registered Interest in Volunteering</th>
<th>Recorded in Training/Volunteer Positions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2011</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2012</td>
<td>93</td>
<td>44%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2013</td>
<td>124</td>
<td>25%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2014</td>
<td>132</td>
<td>38%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2015</td>
<td>190</td>
<td>40%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Could be higher as not all registered students respond to follow-up communication*
Challenges

Students
• Blue Card
• Need for Local References
• Competitiveness

Staff
• Administration
• Managing student expectations
  • connections to opportunities NOT placements
• Keeping communication open with stakeholders (Gupta, McEniery & Creyton, 2013)
• Defining impact
What do students say?

“It was my first time in a hospital and taught me so much. The first few weeks I had no idea what the staff were saying to the patients but a few months later I knew how to talk to patients. From volunteering I know how important it is to talk and listen to patients, and the patients appreciate you spending time with them so much. The experience has really increased my confidence.”

*Focus Group Respondent, 2014*

I think that volunteering so far has provided me with some really valuable experience in a hospital setting and communicating with patients, their families and medical staff, which will assist in my future studies and future career working in health.

*Online survey, 2014*
What do community managers say?

“Students have had a positive impact on the patients here at the Hospital. They have made a real difference and are truly appreciated by our staff.”

*Industry Representative, 2014*

“Queensland Meals on Wheels has appreciated the QUT Faculty of Health’s students’ participation as volunteers within Services in South East Queensland in 2013 and 2014. The students have had a consistently positive impact.

This participation as volunteers within our community service is valuable as it demonstrates ‘real life and real needs’ to students while it shows our older volunteers and clients a positive contribution by younger volunteers in the community.”
So where to from here?

- Imperative for online resources
- Limited funding
- Limited staffing
- A need to change, think creatively
- Opportunities to work with other university partners
- Apply the flexibility and creative problem-solving that we started with
QUESTIONS?

Connections for Learning Program

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