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# Crynoldebau / abstracts

Students as collaborators using Problem Based Learning to inform University Practice

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Health Psychology is a third year specialist option module offered to students in the Psychology Department. To date, this module has used vignettes and case studies, regularly applied in health care training (Peabody et al., 2000), to help students apply psychological theory to hypothetical examples. Although this method has been helpful for encouraging students to apply theory and resolve dilemmas this approach remains hypothetical thus potentially limiting how engaged the students become with the process. In collaboration with the University’s Student Support Services this module trialed a problem based learning approach to pose genuine challenges faced by the University’s Student Support Services with the aim of students developing innovative interventions. From a pedagogical perspective this was with the intention of engaging students in the application of psychological theory through real world problem solving as well as exploring collaborative learning between students and university services to inform practice. Case studies based on challenges experienced by student support services; including student substance misuse, encouraging use of mental health services and improving sexual health practices, were presented to students at the start of the module. Students worked in groups through a series of seminars to review and critique current service provision before using psychological theory to develop their own intervention in response to their chosen case. Students presented their proposals back to student support services and the module coordinator during a pitching session where formative feedback was provided for implementation towards a written assessment. This presentation overviews the pedagogical approach and seminar structure as well as considering how this was embedded into the assessment. Finally an evaluation of the exercise from the perspective of student support staff, student satisfaction and assessment performance will be provided along with recommendations for the role of future collaborative projects.