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Evaluating Group Academic Support

Abstract:

Abstract (max 500words)

Background: This project aims to explore the experiences of students attending group academic supervision to support learning for their summative assessment. The National Student Survey highlight that students are less positive about their assessment and feedback relating to their assignments in comparison to other facets of their learning experiences (Williams & Kane 2008). However, Ferrell (2012) suggests assessment and feedback is at the heart of the students learning. Enhancing the student experience through improving approaches to assessment and feedback is therefore a priority within the School of Health and Social Care (SH&SC) and the wider University.

Objectives: This project aims to explore the experiences of students attending group academic supervision (GAS) to support learning for their summative assessment. This involved facilitated group work to support students with their essay submissions rather than individualised feedback on drafts

Methods: A qualitative interpretivist approach. Four facilitated focus groups of 8-10 undergraduate student nursing students who had participated in Group Academic Support were undertaken. Results were analysed thematically.

Results: The main themes identified were: student perceptions; Student engagement; suggested improvements of the sessions; University Academic Support services. As with other groups, students can be resistant to change but this research enables staff to learn and change practices based on student feedback this will allow this approach to be more effective and provide support to students develop their learning and to undertake written summative assessments with confidence.

Conclusions: there is currently little evidence to support the introduction of group academic support there are many arguments to be made for the introduction of this approach into the new undergraduate nursing curriculum. Currently, resources are being stretched to the limit and looking at individual drafts is time consuming and is unsustainable therefore GAS could be an alternative to looking at draft work. There was an acknowledgement of the potential benefits of GAS as well as potential disadvantages of this form of formative feedback for students. Work needs to be carried out to ensure students clearly understand the purpose of these academic support sessions and how they can be used to enhance students learning and understanding.

Ferrell, G (2012) A view of the Assessment and Feedback Landscape: baseline analysis of policy and practiced from the JISC Assessment and Feedback programme.

<http://www.jisc.ac.uk/media/documents/programmes/elearning/Assessment/JISCAFBaselineReportMay2012.pdf>. [Accessed 06.12.16]

Williams, J. and Kane, D. (2008) Exploring the national Student Survey Assessment and Feedback Issues York: The Higher Education Academy