

DOCMAN – overall student and teaching evaluations focused on Intellectual outputs 3, 4 and 5.

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Overview

This report represents the combined feedback from the modules which were undertaken as part of the DOCMAN project. Each module was delivered in a blended format – with online learning and a one week intensive programme in one of the partner countries. All students participated in a focus group at the end of the intensive programmes and were then invited to complete a survey at the end of each module. At the end of the third module, all teachers were invited to a focus group.

Student Evaluations

In all stages of the analysis we considered how far the programme of education had contributed to cultural and value driven leadership development of the participants. Consequently, some recommendations may be made from the outcomes for future intercultural management programmes.

A longitudinal approach was applied to the student evaluation process. At the end of each of the modules focus group discussions, employing a number of practical components from open space technique were conducted and recorded for analysis. Module evaluation questionnaires were used to determine any changes in practice following the module delivery. Key questions relating to the overall experience of learning on the modules formed the basis of the discussions with students. All data collection were concerned with identifying the impact of collaborative educational provision and the benefits of collaboration in learning to the development of health and social care management knowledge and skills

All data from across the three modules evaluations were combined and subjected to a thematic analysis process

Key themes emerging from the student evaluation

- Overall benefits of the Cross-cultural learning experience
- Cultural experience
- Teaching and learning experience
- Group work
- Practical experience

Benefits of the cross-cultural learning experience

The feedback from all three modules demonstrated a high satisfaction with the organisation and delivery of the three intensive weeks. Students appreciated the opportunity to work with other health and social care personnel from across different countries and cultures. While the students could acknowledge the cultural differences within their groups in terms of practice they were also able to identify a number of shared challenges that they face in their day-to-day working life. Key themes emerged from the focus groups and the end of module questionnaires: overall experience of the intensive weeks in terms of environment; teaching and learning experience; the group work activity and the visits to practice environments.

Overall students were happy with the accommodation and the catering provided across the three intensive week experiences. They appreciated the international nature of the group and the kindness and availability of the teaching team. Their overall view was the weeks were well organised albeit the majority felt this was too short and would have liked it to be two weeks so that group activity in particular could have been developed further. Group work was the best evaluated activity across the three modules. The challenge to work in English while anxiety provoking for some was rated as a positive and the choice to mix the groups in terms of participating countries was also viewed favourably. Some students chose to attend more than one module and could therefore offer evaluation from across modules rather than just one delivery.

The hospitality and catering was very good and reasonably priced. We had so much fun and overall the learning experience was excellent. I really liked the international nature of the teaching and student group.

I attended two of the intensive weeks I felt the weeks were well organised and I thought everything was fine. I would have liked more time to get to know the other students from abroad better. All in all they were all very nice experiences and I would repeat it again any time. The atmosphere was great. Everyone was very motivated and the atmosphere encouraged co-operation among the group.

I really liked broadening horizons and gaining insight in the nursing practice and challenges in other countries. It was an eye-opening experience to discuss practice issues with other professionals and to get new perspectives.

The whole week was really amazing. I met new people from my own school and new people and staff from abroad. I really liked the topics and different lectures. I think Kristina's and Simons lectures were amazing.

The after school activities were identified as times when under a more relaxed atmosphere students exchanged practice experiences both good and bad. The opportunities for these exchanges provided reassurance to them that perhaps the challenges they faced in practice were cross cultural rather than just relevant to their own country. Albeit some students complained that the beer might have been cheaper!, *Expensive beer ... (have you been to the Czech Republic?)*

During social activity we often discussed our experiences in practice and the issues we had to deal with. I was surprised at how often this was a shared problem across the countries.

The intensive week provided connections between interesting people from different countries and made it possible to exchange experience and knowledge. It would be nice to have more time dedicated to socializing with other students and lecturers but as I know the time constraints of the intensive week were designed as they were to make them the best version possible.

The criticisms around the accommodation was to do with its proximity to the campus. Orientation to the campus and the use of campus guides was considered good practice albeit there were occasions when the students felt this could have been done better.

There was a problem with the hostel location. It would have been better if it was closer to the University. When we got to the campus it was difficult to find your way around or to know where to go on the first day. Guidance and signs in the beginning would have really helped.

And Introduction of workshops before you have to sign in. Practical information about fees, transport, and lunch would have been of help on the first day. We found it difficult to find our way to the classes.

Teaching and Learning Experience

Throughout the intensive weeks a number of different teaching and learning strategies were employed by the teaching teams to try and address the diverse learning styles

of the student groups. Most of the students were happy with the teaching styles across all three modules. However there were some approaches that were more popular than others. Structure and timing of input and the ability to present the material in a clear and audible format. Intercultural working groups were considered the best learning environments. Here students with the support of a specific mentor would work together on a practice challenge, breaking it down into its component parts, addressing the cultural similarities and differences and agreeing on an outcome that might work for all.

The input was good but I really liked teaching sessions where the teacher was enthusiastic about her subject. The classes were challenging but mostly in a good way. We had a lecture and then we did group work so there was no time to get bored.

Teamwork and interaction with lecturers. All of the lecturers were ready to help us with any question. I felt a lot of support.

The best thing about the intensive week was to connect with other nurses and time to work together to solve the problems we all face in practice. Additionally the lectures were all very interesting and motivating to research further.

Nice lecturers, practical approach to lectures, Lectures had a good structure, Good amount of lectures, Good lectures, Teachers always present – easy to ask questions, enough time

Päivi Huotari lecture and networking with other students-fruitful discussions.

The student diversity in terms of situated learning, practical experience problem-solving skills and experience of using on line resources are key considerations in supporting any educational provision with cross – cultural groups. There were – key areas where the students felt challenges in terms of their ability to complete the module. These were navigation of REPPU the online learning environment. Time to complete pre module work as this was presented in English, Assessment guidelines and time to complete the work, practical experience in terms of visits to health and social care institutions,

Module preparation

The importance of preparation for the modules was addressed across the three iterations. Early access to the virtual learning environment to help the student to make sense of the expectations of the module and to interact with some of the materials that they were expected to use was part of the feedback in module 1 and to some extent

in module 2. As the modules were presented in English and the virtual environment was also presented in this format this created some challenges for the students to overcome. The development of an understandable roadmap with clear signposting to module information, learning materials and assessment expectations

The workload could be more in the week, after the intensive week there is so much more other studies and work etc. if there was more time to prepare before the course and to be able to read the materials this would be beneficial too.

The intensive week really should be an intensive week. Ongoing assessment is very demanding. One assignment for the whole course would be enough. Pre-learning tasks could be reading things and lectures could also be done using zoom. Group work starts from the first day and the outcome of the group work is the essay and presentation. There is no need for other tasks unless something needs to be fixed.

Assessment preparation

In preparation for the final assessment the student were facilitated to work together in the classroom and to develop a group presentation which would also go towards their final assessment. The rationale was that this group approach would help to develop problem solving skills and provide content and thinking towards their own final assessment. As can be seen below the feedback on the group work was excellent. The main concerns appears to have been around timing of the assignment and feedback. Students felt that better, clearer explanation on assessments on REPPU would have helped them to deal with the challenges faced in completing these tasks. However, when asked where the additional detail might be added there were no suggestions.

I think we needed a clearer explanation of what the assignment was to address and some information on how to structure it on REPPU. Would also have liked more time to prepare and do reading before intensive week.

Better explanation of assignment in REPPU more time before intensive week, Description of assignments were unclear.

Description information after due date of assignment

The topic of feedback was very important as was the date of submission. It was interesting to note when additional time was offered to the group as a whole those who had completed the assignments were not happy with the change in date being offered

There were inconsistencies in the assignment hand in times and instructions changed with some people getting longer than others. This was not fair to us as we had already submitted our work

Working in Groups

A strong and consistent theme running across the three modules was the positive attitude to group work. The teaching team had agreed that we wanted the intensive weeks to be interactive and cross –cultural and cross professional in nature. To this end groups were established with the specific aim of mixing both cultures and professions to ensure a wide and interesting spread of discussion. The students consistently related how exciting it was to meet other students from different backgrounds and some of the working ideas and projects represented a broad and innovative contribution because of the student mix.

The best part of the intensive weeks was the group work. I really enjoyed working with the other students and I began to understand other roles in my organisation which had not really been clear to me before.

The groups were just great and the support we got from the teachers was incredible. Fiona was just fantastic and we learned so much from her and her experience.

I enjoyed working in the groups. I was a bit worried about my English but once we started to work together it was ok

The key message from the students was having more time to really spend time together and to continue to work on the projects they had developed. They questioned if there was a way they could continue this with the on-line support systems. Many students reported meeting people they wanted to stay in touch with each other. For those students who completed more than one module there was a very strong bond and they tended to be culture carriers bringing experience and examples of innovations across modules. Student ambassadors were also welcome for example one particular student – Dennis was mentioned in a great deal of the feedback from one of the intensive weeks as being a key part of the process and also a willing guide and support to students from other countries. Interestingly the social activities were also a time when ideas were shared in terms of practice

Working in groups developed us as a team. We got so much out of these experiences. There never appeared to be enough time to do the group work

The group work was a great chance to exchange experience. The mixed groups were a really good idea and there was good interaction in English.

The student ambassador 'Dennis' was just fantastic. He really helped us to find our way around. We went out socially and that was also a good time to exchange experiences from our own countries. Sharing knowledge and experience. Good time for discussion

Field Visits,

Each of the three intensive weeks had a day set aside for field work. In each of the host countries the experiences were spread across health and social care as much as possible. However, the difference in practice and roles in these services in each of the host countries made it a challenge to come up with areas to meet the interests of all of the students. While field work was considered useful and popular with some of the groups. It proved to be an area where lack of relevant experience was considered a problem for the students.

The best thing was to exchange experiences and learn about different health systems.

In places where we visited it was good but next time more visits for those who work in the social work area would be better.

Missed the social work point of view, Field visits?? Social Work organisations, Too long on the history of the hospital.

Include more social work content so that health care and social work point of view would both be even-handedly introduced.

It would be nice to have the visiting day more organised. When we went out to the unit they didn't know we were there and they were not prepared for us. It was a bit of an awkward feeling having to explain that.

The work that was done in groups was the most educational aspect of the whole experience

Perhaps the most rewarding aspect of the modules was getting feedback which indicated we had made an impact not just on theory but also on practice. Most of this came from group work and practice visits, the opportunity to discuss issues and to exchange potential solutions to common problems.

As a result of this modules I feel more confident in capacity building and improving service delivery in my practice.

It really helped to know that the problems you have in your own practice are the same to those of other countries. I think I have a lot to bring back to my practice placement because of some of the ideas I discussed while I was here.

I really liked the time for talking and identifying key problems and how we might solve them. It made me realise we could change some of the practices in our country and that was a real eye opener.

Teacher focus group – Evaluation of modules

A focus group of seven lecturing staff involved in teaching at least one of the DOCMAN modules was held to explore their experiences and perceptions modules and intensive weeks that accompanied these. Questions were focused around the challenges and benefits for the students, academics, administrative staff and institutions. Participants also had an opportunity to add additional comments or elaborate on aspects of the discussion. The focus group was held virtually at the end of the three modules and was moderated by GMS. The focus group was recorded and transcribed and analysed for themes to support the evaluation of this part of the project. The transcripts were read multiple times and codes named (such as ‘group working’) and then codes were developed into the following five themes

1. Interdisciplinary and intercultural exposure and learning
2. Collaboration and social learning
3. University procedure and governance hurdles
4. Added value of joint European modules
5. Relevance to practice

Interdisciplinary and intercultural exposure and learning

Through the project, students from different professions, different universities and different countries and cultures work together in the modules to develop shared assignments. Through this process they gained an appreciation of the different

perspectives of the way variety of participants. It was clear that this part of the project was one of the key benefits of this programme. While there might be some minor challenges such as developing shared understanding – the vast majority of respondents reflected on the developmental opportunities for the academics and students in relation to intercultural and interdisciplinary learning. A number of the teaching staff highlighted the formal and informal learning and benefits of this that occurred through the purposeful integration of student from different universities into working groups.

I think this intercultural learning was a great success in our programme and the students learned both formally and informally. I think we teachers created a positive atmosphere and we were quite close to the students so we also made it possible to have formal and informal learning. We were easy to access, and available to answer questions. And when we made the decision to get the students to work in international teams it was a good decision and that was the best way to learn formally and informally. (PH)

Getting accustomed to the different perspectives and the different, things that come from their culture or practice and then quickly learning to work together to get to complete a shared assignment. (JA)

The intercultural learning and exposure health and social care settings was very beneficial. Through this opportunity it could allow students to reflect on their practices through exposure to practice in other settings.

Field visits during the intensive programmes were really good.. It was a benefit for the students to learn the way they each worked in their own country and to learn the conditions of work across countries. It allowed comparison. It was good to see variety in practice ... Intercultural practices (Mej)

The opportunities to develop intercultural competence may also be supported through these visits. For example this respondent highlighted how national cultures might impact on care and professions.

Those visits to actual health care organisations were quite beneficial for the learning also much learned from cultures and how those national cultures impact on health and social care and professional climates. They realised the differences between different cultures in terms of practices and I think that was a

very good to learn and it also helps national work in health and social care we need to understand these different cultural backgrounds and competencies. (PH)

In some instances it also may have helped to develop their ideas about their own culture that they had not thought about before

The students seemed to have a very strong kind of National atmosphere kind of we are the Finnish team, we like the others but still we are the Finnish team that was very good as well. It was about their own identity and recognising their own identity as part of a multi-cultural kind of environment and that is really quite positive. (PH)

Collaboration and social learning

We designed the modules with a lead university but collaboration of all universities on delivery and assessment of the students. The teaching methods were designed to provide the students with opportunities for collaborative and social learning. In terms of collaboration, this was a key element of the modules for both the academic staff but also the learners. The intensive weeks had group assessments and the students quickly had adapted to working in an assigned group to meet assessment objectives.

The teamwork was excellent. I thought they were fantastic. Sharing perspectives, learning from each other. Learning in different learning environments and have experience different learning processes. It gives the students the opportunity to see that you can learn from different approaches and other processes

There were challenges in development of the materials that a number of the teaching staff highlighted. One was in relation to setting the scene or platform to allow the learning. While other lecturers highlighted the challenge and importance of shared vision for the teaching approach.

*For me it was making sure we were pitching the material at the right level in terms of context. (JA)
Developing a shared vision of modules and content. Not so much about what but rather how to run the modules (Maj)*

University procedure and governance hurdles

It was clear that there were significant differences between many of the processes and procedures within the four universities. Although the project management group and teaching teams tried to anticipate this and provide student guidance it was clear there were some differences that were not fully explored. These included aspects such as referencing marking criteria marking deadlines and overall standards of expected Masters level study.

There were different perceptions among some of the universities about which referencing system to use. And I think there was also something about the different marking systems. We each use broadly similar, but different marking systems but we then have to transpose those across to our own system and I think that probably caused us a few problems. (SS)

Other areas such as how marks are finalised and released also we are differences, which were not anticipated. The teaching staff viewed this negatively as it was felt these gaps resulted in perceptions of that processes or procedures are not done properly or that there could be some unfairness.

We have to get feedback and get it back different cultures at universities to mark the work and process of giving feedback that has been a challenge. The time gap sometimes gives the students the impression that things are not taken care of properly. (PH)

Students who did more than one module some felt the grading and marking was unfair and there were many people involved. (M)

Joint European Masters modules – challenges and benefits

When the project was set up one of the benefits of this project was that allowed part-time Masters students in practice to access the benefits of joint European study. While we felt this project did deliver these opportunities and create benefits there are still challenges. One of these challenges is in relation to funding and being able to top up the costs for part-time students.

Money and funding for participation on the programme particularly for part time students is challenging ... It is important to have additional funding schemes for both students and teachers to travel abroad. [A challenge is] often resulting in having to find new or additional funding schemes. (M)

Other challenges involved widespread acceptance of faculties and other colleagues within the University to support the administration or at times even the promotion of the project to students they supported.

*Lack of administrative support – and integration of these staff into the projects (JA).
They don't see the fruitful benefits as they have to focus on budgets (PH)*

The benefits and challenges were often student focused. However the teachers involved in the project through the modules felt they also had benefit and it was a staff development opportunity

It was good to see if different teaching and learning approaches and how teachers interact with their students. (RJ)

One thing also that I found a great learning experience was just seeing how the cultures in the universities worked.. Just seeing the way they worked, for example expectations from staff and probably the most striking for me was actually how Xx University have changed their work culture and the physical set up of the university to fit this – that was amazing to see those changes. (JA)

Finally a number of the lecturing staff even those who were native English speakers felt that the opportunities for students and lectures to work on and undertake modules with native English speakers what is the benefit of their development.

Practicing English with native speakers (M)

Also learning and working in English is a benefit as well (FM)

Through the opportunities to participate in the project a number of the lectures thought about the sustainability. It was thought to be important to maintain the focus of European working across universities despite the many challenges that institutions might be facing

It is important to keep partnership working and international developments at the forefront of the work we are doing as an institution and particularly in the times as we move ahead. Institution challenge is getting time out for lectures to be a part of these initiatives (JA)

Relevance to practice

The modules in this program were set up to support master students who were managers and leaders in health and social care. The modules were also focused on application to practice which was demonstrated through the teaching approaches and assessment strategies. The teaching staff felt strongly that this was delivered in the modules in fact one of the lectures felt that the changes and innovations that they suggested as part of the assignment could possibly even be copyrighted as they were clearly a huge benefit.

I think it was a great to see and to learn and to open the minds and I am hoping that post Frankfurt there are a couple of ideas that have been implemented in practice for real. I am not sure if they would have the support from their seniors but they certainly had some fantastic ideas and I did suggest that some of them out copyright on it and I think some of it would be really good for the institutions here to see but nothing negative about it (FM)

The students in their approaches to learning and working together demonstrated many transferable skills relevant to practice which seemed to develop through the intensive weeks.

I think this is a huge challenge but also a huge benefit because they have to use so many transferable skills like negotiation and communication. The soft skills they develop and in terms of benefit getting an assignment done [during intensive week]. (JA)

In another instance one of the lecturing staff highlighted how working with the students actually gave ideas of how to bring about changes within the University academic department.

What was interesting was the different practitioner backgrounds of the students yet they came together and worked as a team. They were all managers in practices

and had developed many competencies. Something good we can use to overcome the resistance we have to have discussion in our own department. They came from very different areas and yet they came together and worked as a multi-disciplinary team and that's positive (MR)

Many of the collaborative and interesting ideas came about during the intensive weeks but also it was evidence that through the written work done independently that students also had integrated much of the learning into practice.

I can see how the students applied the new information about capacity building for example or change management ... how they used this information in their practice. It's and excellent to see that type of learning in written work. You can demonstrate through the assessments completed by the students that they have applied their learning to practice and I think that's extremely positive ... that was evident in assignments across the modules (RJ)

The teaching teams also felt the learning was extended beyond the modules – and that through they may have new strategies for their practice.

You could see the students working out new ideas and beginning to think about how they might apply this new theory or thinking in their practice environments so what we can say from the three modules is that the content that went into trueness has been highly evaluated but the students as being something positive and we have that from their words. (RJ)

Implications for the future

- Very important to have a student handbook of relevant regulations and FAQs and have this fully clear by all lecturers at start of module
- Spend a great deal of time on the discussing the approach – shared teaching plans (as well as content) would be beneficial. For example if a flipped classroom is the main mode of teaching – ensure all teachers are alighted with this – but also the clarity to students is there beforehand.

- There are different 'norms' of marking and expectations that only emerged when marking.
- The necessity of including so many additional funding schemes for both students and teachers to travel abroad. (Maj)