

# Encouraging and assessing critical self-reflection whilst on placement: the SM experience

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# Structure of the presentation

- The benefits of a work-based learning component within the curriculum
- The benefits of reflection within the curriculum
- Portfolio in Higher Education and their content
- The role of the tutor
- The challenges for your students
- The SM experience: approach and a reflection
- A summary
- Recommended reading

# The benefits of a work-based learning component within the curriculum

Identify opportunities for students to learn about;

- work, workplace practices and how organisations ‘function’,
- **how to deal with and respond to feedback from others,**
- the communication process generally and how to improve their own individual set of employability / ‘life’ skills,
- **‘experiences’ - how they might reflect on / learn from them,**
- the evaluation of their own performance and that of others, and thus ultimately,
- **their own personal development, including an orientation towards lifelong learning and their future career aspirations.**

# The benefits of reflection within the curriculum

Providing opportunities for the student to;

- stimulate a stronger engagement with the learning process,
- make personal connections which consolidate the learning,
- improve their current practice resulting in identified actions,
- make 'new sense' of familiar or 'run-of-the-mill' situations,
- integrate existing and new knowledge,
- stimulate a process whereby self and peer-evaluation occurs,
- develop a critical consciousness,
- enhance their on-going personal and continuing professional development.

So, the aspiration .....

Portfolio should include evidence  
linked to reflective and analytical commentary  
rather than merely gathering  
a 'collection' of data  
(Klenowski *et al.*, 2006).

# The content of portfolio

According to Baume & Yorke (2002) the portfolio should draw from a real-life setting / experience and include;

- the rationale, objectives and the anticipated outcomes,
- **documentary evidence setting the context,**
- some form of interrogation of the setting / experience,
- **a reflective commentary,**
- the experience related to relevant academic literature,
- **cross-referencing of the material presented,**
- and a justification for the inclusion of material presented.

**‘A portfolio should be scholarly .....  
with the accompanying insights connecting directly  
with relevant theoretical constructs’ (Baume & Yorke, 2002:7)**

# The role of the tutor

The role should include;

- designing suitably crafted learning and assessment tools which recognise that 'reflection' can take time,
- developing learning contracts for students and/or partnership frameworks / agreements with the employers to support the learning and assessment process,
- discussing with the students the values and beliefs which underpin the portfolio,
- integrating and utilising the placement experiences within academic activities and studies when the students return.

# The role of the tutor

And, in specifically supporting the students;

- support the shift from ‘passive recipient’ to ‘active learner’,
- encouraging the students to ‘notice’ their learning,
- facilitating dialogue between the students – a ‘learning community’ – using peer-learning partners,
- encouraging reflection at two levels: ‘learning about working practices’ and ‘learning about learning’
  - ~ stop and step back from the experience – ask Qs
  - ~ what questions do you need to ask yourself at this point?
  - ~ are your entries changing?
- respect for the student and their needs to keep their feelings confidential – ethical issues surround reflection.

# The challenges for your students

The challenges for your students might include;

- taking ownership of their learning in a different way – empowerment can be liberating or stressful!
- **engaging with weekly (or structured) conversations,**
- becoming open, trusting and therefore potentially vulnerable,
- **being willing to expose their strengths and areas for development in an honest and frank way,**
- sharing their new insights, experiences and understandings in a social setting with their peer group,
- **the challenge of integrating academic theory with their practical experiences – why do they appear to disagree?**

## In summary

Klenowski *et al.* (2006) summarises the work of Weimer (2002) in recognising five important considerations when introducing Portfolio into the learning and assessment experience;

- a shift in the balance of power,
- the nature of the ‘content’,
- the tutor moving from a ‘teacher of theory’ to a ‘facilitator of a learning experience’,
- the responsibility on the student to engage,
- the potential complexity of the assessment and evaluation processes.

# Components of the SM Portfolio

1. Reflective Placement Essay
2. **A Cross Referenced Matrix**
3. Pre-Placement Questionnaire
4. Curriculum Vitae (prior to placement)
5. Goal Setting / SMART Objectives
6. Employer Feedback Forms 1, 2 and 3
7. Evidence from Placement Development Advisor meeting(s)
8. Revised Curriculum Vitae



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## Cross Referenced Matrix

students need to decide what they use as their best examples  
of evidence whilst demonstrating appropriate competence  
**(self directed learning, constructing knowledge)**

| Example of Evidence | Self Management                                      | Leadership | Motivation                                       | Effective Communication                         | Achievement/ Reward/ Performance               | Skills Development                                    | To be selected by the student |
|---------------------|--|------------|--|---|--|---|-------------------------------|
| <b>1</b>            | Evidence of structured daily work plan (Appendix 1)  |            | Set performance target for June (Appendix 3)     | E-mail sent to Director (Appendix 6)            | Employee of the Month certificate (Appendix 8) | Belbin Test score (Appendix 11)                       |                               |
| <b>2</b>            | Reflection notes on pre placement goals (Appendix 2) |            | Appraisal feedback evidence (Appendix 4)         | Example of training session layout (Appendix 7) | Memo of thanks for employer (Appendix 9)       | Certificate of Training: Level Stage 2 (Appendix 12)  |                               |
| <b>3</b>            |  |            | Mentor feedback highlighting change (Appendix 5) |   | Newspaper cutting of an event (Appendix 10)    | Personal SWOT and activities to support (Appendix 13) |                               |

## The benefits of this approach

- Structured approach – gather, assimilate, analyse, reflect (Kolbs, 1984; Gibbs, 1988)
- One stage submission
- Practical use – interviews
- Framework for assessors (Gibbs & Coffey, 2004)
- Measures competency based performance against the generic assessment criteria

## Reflection on Portfolio submissions

- Evidence of systematic understanding of the learning processes (constructive alignment)
- Majority of portfolios demonstrated “quality” academic underpinning
- Critical thinking applied to WBL issues
- Ethical dilemmas explored rather than avoided
- Management of the complex relationships

## On-going developments

- Highlighted the different levels of aptitude displayed across all programmes – need to address
- Seek student and industry feedback - integrate best practice from Level C onwards
- Engage with developments within the subject so that the curriculum is up to date
- “Fit for purpose”



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# Recommended Reading

- Alderman, B. and Milne, P. 2005. *A model for work-based learning*. Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press
- Baume, D. and Yorke, M. 2002. The reliability of assessment by portfolio on a course to develop and accredit teachers in HE. *Studies in Higher Education*. 27(1), 7-25.
- Gibbs, G. and Coffey, M., 2004. *The impact of training of university teachers on their teaching skills, their approach to training and the approach to learning of their students*. Journal of Higher Education Academy and Sage, 5 (1), 87-100
- Hind, D. and Moss, S. 2005. *Employability skills*. Sunderland: Business Education
- Klenowski, V., Askew, S. and Carnell, E. 2006. Portfolios for learning, assessment and professional development in higher education. *Assessment and evaluation in Higher Education*. 31(3), 267-286.
- Moon, J.A. 2004. *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning: theory and practice*. London: Routledge Falmer.
- Moon, J. 2006. *A handbook of reflective and experiential learning: theory and practice*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Routledge.

Thank you for your time

- Are there any questions?