Conference Papers

Enterprise Engagement and Experiential Learning Group (E3L)

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Collaborative Learning and Developing the Capacity as a Reflective Practitioner

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Recommended Citation

Collaborative learning and developing the capacity as a reflective practitioner.

The learner

Syllabus content

The community

Introduction

The BA in Community Development allows those involved in the community to achieve formal qualifications while remaining active within a community setting. The programme aims to sustain their contribution to an area while developing their capacity to add value to that contribution through supported learning in the workplace. There are no formal written examinations in this programme.

In semester 1 the students take on a number of modules where they identify their own individual learning paths and begin the process of becoming effective and critically reflective practitioners. Key skills acquired at this initial stage enable the student to develop as a reflective and collaborative learner.

Methodology, approach used – putting reflection at the heart of the process:

In semester 1 , the modules are underpinned by the prior learning of the students. In this sense they are the co-creators of the learning in the area, stemming from their experiences in the community setting. The documenting of this learning and self evaluation is developed through the module 'Portfolio Methods for RPL'. The module goes beyond the individual student but attempts to bring the key learning of the module back into the community setting. The intention is to create learned workers and communities of practice. Establishing an awareness that learning occurs in multiple settings and is not dictated by the traditional learning fora is critically important.

In using a learning portfolio to document their prior informal, non formal learning from the community setting they become collaborators in driving the future direction of community based programmes and initiatives. The portfolio is a dynamic tool which is used to record the learning gained through work placements throughout the programme. The process of preparing the learning portfolio to report on placement results in the learner identifying and articulating key learning gained in the placement. It allows the student to capture the essential knowledge, skills and competences gained and to reflect on how these key abilities will impact future practice. It brings a self awareness to their practice where the individual takes ownership of their learning in a real and self-directed way.
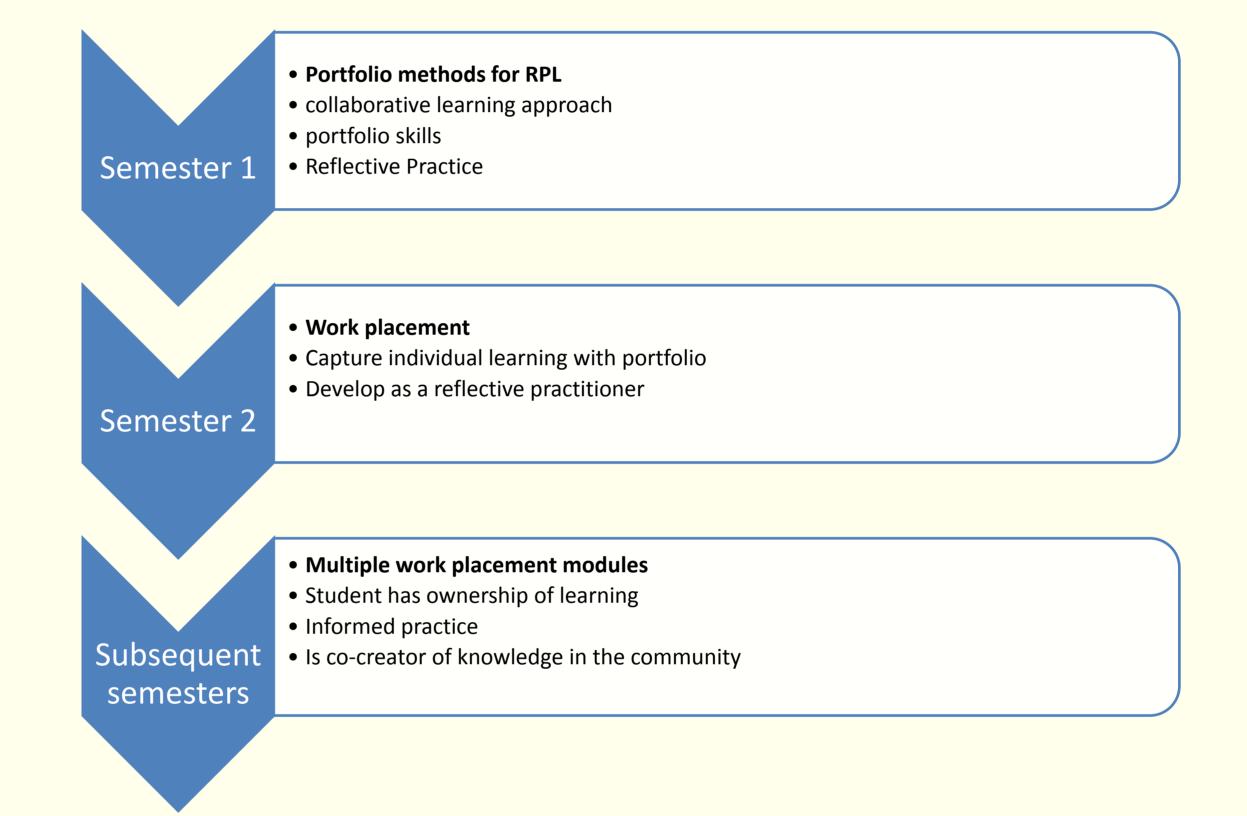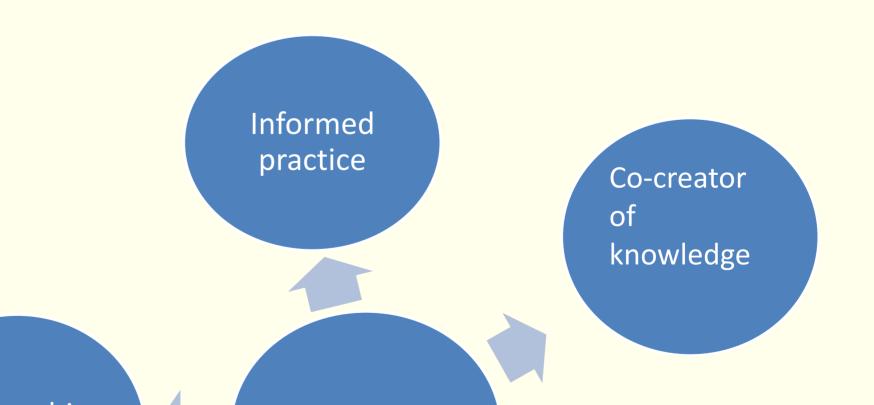
Results/Outcomes of this approach

•The programme design provides a **collaborative learning experience** where the students learn as a unit through discussion and lectures which in turn informs their individual practice when in a community setting. It realises the value of the learning which an individual has.

•The process results in the **student taking ownership of their individual learning journey** and focuses their minds on future development.
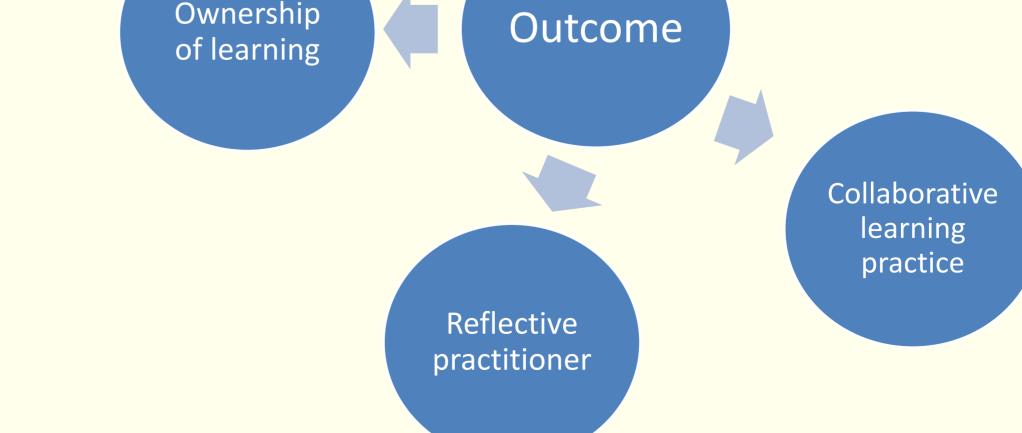
•It creates a collaborative learning ethos within the students and builds the capacity to be a **reflective practitioner**. It also identifies the strengths of collaborative learning and practice in identifying a way forward.

•By using the learning portfolio model and the approach used to document work based learning the learner is a **co-creator of knowledge** through the informal classroom based discussions of identifying key knowledge, skills and competences. The realisation of the strengths of informal and non formal learning empowers the students in their contributions to the future direction of community development.

•This approach has resulted in meeting the increasing pressures in the professionalization of community based practice.

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Semester 1
- **Portfolio methods for RPL**
- collaborative learning approach
- portfolio skills
- Reflective Practice

Semester 2
- **Work placement**
- Capture individual learning with portfolio
- Develop as a reflective practitioner

Subsequent semesters
- **Multiple work placement modules**
- Student has ownership of learning
- Informed practice
- Is co-creator of knowledge in the community

Informed practice

Co-creator of knowledge

Ownership of learning

Outcome

Collaborative learning practice

Reflective practitioner

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