Reverse Articulation?
Creating pathways for meaningful employment against VET qualifications in the first year university experience.

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ABSTRACT

Meaningful employment whilst completing undergraduate studies can be highly motivating and beneficial to ones educational experience; however opportunities are limited and can be highly competitive. The Undergraduate Bachelor of Science - Nursing student of Edith Cowan University (ECU) can at the end of their first year of study apply for the Vocational Education and Training qualification – Assistant in Nursing- Acute Care (AINAC).

Background

In the apprenticeship model of bygone days the nurses earned while they learned. With the move to university education in the last quarter of the 20th century, nursing students support themselves. The current undergraduate nursing student at ECU achieves registration with the Nursing and Midwifery Board of Australia upon successful completion of the three year nursing course. The problem facing many students is that they have to support themselves financially often in unrelated industries such as hospitality and sales as the opportunity for employment within health is limited. The majority of nursing students seeking work in health will end up working in the aged care environment, which many see, as a means to an end rather than a career choice. (Happell, 2002) This means the student faces a long delay in connecting with the real work environment. Moreover, hospital trained nurses became acquainted with the clinical surroundings when they commenced their studies. (Cope, Cuthebertson& Stoddart, 2003; Dunn, Ehrich, Mylonas & Hansford, 2000; McNamara, 2010) The nursing fraternity is very happy with the move to university education however it does bring its own set of challenges including the risk of disconnection with the hospital environment due to limited clinical placements during their studies.

In this nuts and bolts session, we describe how nursing faculty can incorporate vocational qualifications into their Bachelor programs in order to improve the undergraduate experience, provide additional significant qualifications, facilitate meaningful employment and assist with the current nursing shortage.
Lesson Plan

Session outline

Whole group discussion ice breaker (5 mins):
What employment do your students currently participate in?
Are these linked to the current course of study?
Identify areas that VET qualifications are being offered in undergrad studies at your institution

Presenter (5 minutes):
Review of the AINAC at ECU

Paired discussion (10 mins): Participants consider one or more of the following:

1. What courses of study could this be replicated in within your university/institution?
2. How will you link with educational partners to facilitate this opportunity for your students?
3. What industry partners do you need to link with to facilitate meaningful employment for your students?
4. Is the self directed learning approach to this initiative the most suitable approach?
5. Discuss the issues that may arise from role ambiguity with meaningful employment and clinical practice.

1. Presenters + Whole group discussion (10 mins):

Draw together ideas from participants for implementation of a similar program within their institutions

Conclusion

This innovation bridges the university and the workplace through networks that already exist but are not currently being utilised. This program allows the student to link with industry; this may provide continuing motivation for their studies, offer a true insight to their future roles, facilitate meaningful employment which assists with the theory practice gap and afford the student the opportunity to build networks within the nursing fraternity.
References


