**Assessment Case Study**

**Taking care of assessment: Supporting reflective writing in the Nursing Associate Foundation Degree**

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**Course:** Nursing Associate Foundation Degree (Apprenticeship)  
**Module:** Promoting Health and Preventing Ill Health  
**Student Level:** 4

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**AN EXAMPLE OF ASSESSMENT THAT INVOLVES...**
- An authentic approach  
- An inclusive approach  
- Promoting assessment literacy  
- Peer assessment/feedback  
- Tackling plagiarism

**AIMS**

The ‘Nursing Associate’ (NA) is a new support role in England bridging the gap between healthcare support workers and registered nurses to deliver hands-on nursing care. The course encompasses a blend of practice and theory modules, including ‘Applied Nursing Science’ and ‘Promoting Health and Preventing Ill Health’. Assessment for the latter comprises two pieces of coursework, one of which is a **1000 word reflective essay** on a relevant episode of care in practice.

The lecturer wished to enhance assessment practice in relation to this essay to **better support the profile** of students on the course. Students range in age from 18-58 years, and are often attracted to the course due to its focus on hands-on experience- and the perception that less theoretical engagement/written assessment is required.

**ACTIONS**

The assessment design of the essay was already fairly robust. As it was focused on an episode of care managed by the individual student, this made it **authentic, inclusive** and personalised (resulting in a very low rate of plagiarism). To complement this, steps were taken to enhance the student’s **assessment literacy**. Existing practices included explaining the Learning Outcomes (LOs) at the module launch, and provision of written assignment guidance.

However, many students within the cohort were anxious about academic writing, and so an **online group activity** was set up to dissect the LOs and assignment brief, and discuss these with fellow students. In addition, a detailed narrated PowerPoint was produced with a **step by step guide** on how to write the assignment, with clearly defined expectations.

The lecturer also **revised the rubric** to make it more appropriate for Level 4 students, and **provided an exemplar**. In the absence of any genuine previous submissions (due to the curriculum being new), a sample essay was created for this purpose.

Consideration was also given to what would constitute **effective feedback** for students on the module. The lecturer introduced a ‘Study Buddy’ system to enable peer assessment, which can in turn improve students’ assessment literacy.

**IMPACT**

Following the introduction of these changes, the pass percentage for the coursework **improved by a third**, with 42% of students gaining a 2:1 or 1st compared to 27% achieving this in the previous practice module they had undertaken. In addition, the subsequent cohort achieved a 95.8% pass rate, compared to 90% pass rate with the previous cohort.

The lecturer had been concerned that creation of the **sample essay** (exemplar) may increase the plagiarism rate, but this did not turn out to be the case. (See also “Message to peers”)

- **41%** of students used the ‘Study Buddy’ system, all of whom found it to be a **positive experience**. Some students had some doubts e.g. fear of plagiarism; competition; a desire to be independent. Yet there were students who wanted to use this system for the future too. Going forward, the lecturer aims to generate an **atmosphere of collaborative learning** to increase the uptake of this system.

**SCALABILITY**

These practices are sustainable and **applicable to any level of study**, as they aim to support students with understanding the question and expectations of an assignment. The lecturer has successfully adopted the same strategies in another of the modules which she leads (‘Applied Nursing Science’, MEQ 97%). In addition, the new **Level 4 Rubric** has been applied to all essay assignments at this level within the course.

**STUDENT FEEDBACK**

- **94% of students** said that they found the narrated PowerPoint useful. Numerous students commented on its value (see example below).
- “I personally found the assignment support very **helpful** [...] we had a guidance PowerPoint, a sample essay and a rubric which really helped me to achieve good marks. This support helped me to clearly **understand** what was expected to achieve a higher grade”.

**MESSAGE TO PEERS and EXTRACT FROM POWERPOINT SLIDES:** see next page
Taking care of assessment: Supporting reflective writing in the Nursing Associate Foundation Degree (continued)

MESSAGE TO PEERS

- In the sample essay, the lecturer did not include any references, as she wanted to empower students rather than making them dependent on the example and heightening the risk of plagiarism.
- The lecturer anticipated that with all the support and guidance available, a 100% pass rate would be achieved. However, this was not the case—proving that there are many other factors to be considered in assessment planning.
- The lecturer aimed to give the students, in light of their academic background, sufficient information and guidance on the assessment to prepare them for level 5 assessments in the next year of their studies.

EXTRACT FROM NARRATED POWERPOINT SLIDES

"If you don’t know where you are going, you’ll end up someplace else."
—Yogi Berra

"Always, always have a plan."
—Rick Riordan

STEP 1. Read the assignment guidance
STEP 2. Book an appointment with Centre of Academic Writing (CAW) now. They provide online service. Get a date for 1-2 weeks before submission
STEP 3. Go through your PowerPoint on Health Promotion
STEP 4. Read some of the resources on health promotion (available on Moodle)
STEP 5. Then, write your description of episode of care (300-500 words, 2 hrs)
STEP 6. Feelings and Evaluation (2 hrs)
STEP 7. ANALYSIS (You may take up to 5-6 hrs)
STEP 8. Conclusion and Action Plan (2 hrs)
STEP 9. Contact your essay support tutor with the draft and make changes
STEP 10. Seek advice from CAW with structure of essay and academic writing
STEP 11. Self-assess your work against the rubric

STEP 11. You may want to look at terminal referencing with a your 'STUDY BUDDY' or Peer assess your work before final submission.

STEER CLEAR FROM PLAGIARISM!

PLANNING YOUR WRITING

Learning about the personal emotional response to the situation (Zielinski, 2012).

Zielinski (2012) emphasises on Learning about the personal emotional response to the situation.

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Learning about the personal emotional response to the situation. (Zielinski, 2012).

Learning about the personal emotional response to the situation (Harvey Zielinski, 2012)

Learning about the personal emotional response to the situation (www.Learningnursing.com)

Learning about the personal emotional response to the situation (MA5)

Learning about the personal emotional response to the situation (H. Zielinski, 2012)

COMMON REFERENCING ERRORS