BSc (Hons) Nursing

Examples of Good Assessment Practice

The purpose of this is document is to outline a 'good practice' example of an assessment strategy from one module within the School of Health and Social Care on the BSc (Hons) Nursing programme. The document has been compiled by Alexandra Carlin (Lecturer and module lead for NUR3034M) who is available for further information if required (acarlin@lincoln.ac.uk). Please note, Dr Aiden Jayanth (Senior Lecturer, UoL) was instrumental in the development of script concordance test papers for the module and should be recognised for his significant contribution to this module.

Design

NUR3034M (Advancing Person-Centred Nursing Practice) is a level 6, skills based (Adult field) nursing module. The assessment strategy includes one formative assessment (a mock in-class test) and two summative assessments; 1) an in-class test (30%); and 2) an essay (70%); aligned to associated learning outcomes (LO's) to ensure validity.

1) The in-class test consisted of two parts; a) 25 Script Concordance Test (SCT) questions (LO6); and b) one long answer task; 'based on the information provided in the case study and using the answers in part A; formulate a holistic plan of care' (LO5).

   a) SCT is an assessment method that has been developed on script theory and hypothetical deductive clinical reasoning (Lubarsky et al., 2013; Groves et al., 2013). SCT is intentionally designed to assess a student's ability to reason when faced with challenging decisions, typically encountered in clinical decision making processes (Cooke et al., 2017). Traditionally, SCT is seen in medicine (Charlin et al., 2000; Lubarsky et al., 2009; Dory et al., 2012); and follows a format whereby a clinical case scenario is presented followed by a series of questions; "if you were thinking 'x' and then you learn 'y', the likelihood of the impact on a clinical decision is 'z' (Fournier et al., 2008). Our students were presented with a small vignette of a patient in an acute phase of illness/injury; followed by further specific and clear clinical information in order to provide an opportunity to synthesise pathophysiological changes and form judgements on a plan of care/interventions. The summative test papers were reviewed by the in-school 'assessment review group' and the external examiner prior to delivery as a quality assurance mechanism.

b) Part B provided an opportunity to draw conclusions from part a; and further expand on a comprehensive assessment in order to formulate a holistic plan of care. Students were encouraged to use Yura and Walsh's (1987) nursing process; assessing, planning, implementing and evaluating; and additionally discharge goals to structure their long answer.

Associated LO's:

LO5: Draw conclusions following a comprehensive assessment of a patient and synthesise this information to formulate a holistic plan of care.

LO6: Synthesise knowledge and understanding of pathophysiological changes during the acute phase of illness or injury in order to form judgements on plans of care.

2. The essay was developed to ensure flexibility in terms of the students learning. Students were required to select a PBL case (this will be expanded in the delivery section) and write a 2500 word essay including the following elements:

    - Analyse the complexity of the case in terms of providing safe and effective care and support your discussion through a critical appraisal of existing literature/evidence on nursing care and interventions [LO3&4].
    - Justify your clinical judgement based on your patients physical , psychological and social needs; using an appropriate model to shape your discussion [LO2]
    - Propose how you would communicate your plan of care to the patient and the inter-professional team [LO1].

Associated LO's:

LO1: Critique, compare and select appropriate communication strategies in order to maintain boundaries in the nurse-patient relationship and promote effective working across the inter-professional team.

LO2: Make evidence based and appropriate clinical judgments on the physical, psychological and social needs of patients in the acute phase of complex illness or injury.

LO3: Critically appraise the evidence underpinning complex nursing care and interventions in order to provide safe and effective care in increasingly complex cases.

LO4: Analyse and assess unpredictable clinical situations and cases in order to propose and deliver safe and effective care.

Delivery

The majority of the module was delivered using a hybrid model of Problem-based Learning (PBL), as blended learning was incorporated. PBL is considered as learning following a process of working towards the understanding of a problem (Barrows and Tamblyn, 1980, 18). PBL requires high levels of motivation (Jones et al., 2017); therefore use of constructive alignment was essential to aid motivation. Constructive alignment is a system of aligning LO's with teaching/learning activities and assessment (Biggs and Tang, 2011, 105).

It was recognised that SCT would cause anxiety; indeed, this theme came up in the module evaluations as students; *'did not enjoy the* [test] *style';* and *'Script concordance* [test] *caused a lot of stress'.* However, it was felt that the nature of a sitting an in-class test was the compounding factor for anxiety; not necessarily the SCT. Equally, in terms of equity; the test was very different to any other assessment method within the programme; and provided another means of assessment which was different from multiple choice questions. SCT answers are generated using aggregated responses from panel members (clinicians within the faculty); which are weighted accordingly and provide an opportunity for standard deviation of the panel for reference, if required.

Students were provided with an optional lecture, tutorials, three mock papers (available on blackboard) and a formative marked mock (taken under 'exam conditions') to provide support. Students commented in the module evaluations that the *'biology* [test] *help was really good and the mock* [test] *was really helpful for the real thing'.* The formative mock provided a grade and written feedback outlining; 1) how well did your work meet the stated assessment criteria; and 2) how could you improve your future performance in this type of task. The same two question approach is used throughout the BSc (hons) nursing programme.

A virtual resource was developed for the essay to provide guidance and again, tutorial support was available.

Marking and Grading

Part A of the test was marked by inputting values into an excel spreadsheet to produce a grade. All markers used the same spreadsheet and this was checked at moderation. Part B was marked by a small module team (4 staff) who marked approximately 50 papers each. Marking was standardised and moderated. A rubric was provided for part B, although it has

been noted that this was not really effective for producing a grade; next year we intend to amend/adapt the rubric or consider a marking criteria.

The essay was marked by the same small module team. Again, marking was standardised and moderated. The External Examiner provided positive feedback:

> *'The marking and moderating are of an excellent standard. The processes for both marking and moderation are transparent, with clear justification for the marks awarded.*
> *The students work was, overall of a very good standard, reflecting good preparation for the task and clear guidance for its successful achievement. Additionally, the assessment task allows the learning outcomes to be achieved.'*

Feedback and Evaluation

Students received a grade via turnitin for the in-class test; but were required to collect the test papers for written feedback (as the paper was completed by hand).

Feedback for the essay was provided using both a rubric (which is used across the Programme), in-text comments and feedback, via turnitin.

Overall, the module evaluation has achieved an overall satisfaction rate which is higher than the school average.

The module team is confident that the assessment strategy and feedback has provided a good opportunity for 'assessment for learning'.

Reference list available on request.