Checklist: Supporting students’ transitions into practice based professional learning

Objective: For staff development with programme tutors to identify ways they can support students making the transition into practice-based learning. It allows for three areas of discussion based on key themes identified in student interviews by Cooper and Pickering (2008)

Resources needed: Power point with quotes and discussion questions, flip chart, pens

Discussion Point 1 – Becoming a student in the workplace
Show stimulus quote below and divide into groups for questions below

{The} change in status amongst work colleagues from staff worker to student .....isn't easy and demands flexibility amongst the pre-existing workplace relationships and a willingness to change expectations. There was no set pattern to this within the results and individuals' experiences varied enormously in their ability to successfully negotiate this important transition with key 'others' within their work setting (Cooper and Pickering, 2008)

Think about two students you’ve known. Share with the group:

How did the students make the shift from being a non-qualified worker to a professional learner?
What obstacles did they encounter?
How can you as a programme tutor support them in making this move?

As a group identify three tips to feedback to the group. Plenary: Draw up summary sheet “Tips for supporting student – learner transitions” ready for circulating post-workshop.

Discussion Point 2 – From competence measures to reflective practice-based learning
Show stimulus quote below and divide into groups for questions below

I didn’t feel that the NVQ was actually learning, it was actually just producing evidence that you know - and I felt that the degree is more about learning . . . (Student quoted in Cooper and Pickering, 2008)

Think about a student who has done NVQs. Discuss with the group:
Are there any issues for the student in the student moving from a competence-based framework to one concerned with reflective practice-based learning underpinned by theoretical understanding?

Are there any issues for others in the organisation, work colleagues or line managers?

As a group identify any solutions to the problems. Briefly note the issues and solutions under two columns on your flip chart sheet. Swap your sheet with another group. Read their sheet. Add any other solutions you can think of to their problems. Affix to the wall.

Discussion Point 3 – Addressing historical influences

Show stimulus quote below, make introductory points and divide into groups for questions

In the background I came from . . . there were six children in my family, working class people . . . you were expected to get a job, you weren’t encouraged to go out and go to college and things like that . . . you were expected to get a wage .. to look after children. So, for me, to become a Nursery Nurse was like a major thing. But even to get on that. I got told by one of the tutors, you were on the borderline, so that was like, phew, a big confidence drop (Student quoted in Cooper and Pickering, 2008)

Introductory points: Many students will carry with them a history of family and emotional baggage associated with previous learning experiences. For example they may feel studying doesn’t fit their family identity – that it’s ‘not for the likes of us’. Or they may bring with them negative experiences of education where others have doubted their ability to pursue academic study or professional qualifications.

Groups discuss

Should you address such issues and if so how?

Plenary session: Summarise the three discussion areas above. Identify action points for each. Encourage participants to think of two action points they can use in their work with students in the coming months.