Practice Learning Improvement Project

Background:

Practice Learning is central to how we educate our students in the School of Nursing, Midwifery and Social Care. Historically referred to as being "on placement" practice learning is critical to developing graduates that are prepared for a career in health and related services.

This project reviewed our current practice learning processes, taking into account the experiences of students, mentors, service users, service managers from health and social care, Edinburgh Napier University staff and other stakeholders.

The main focus was to towards the following goals:

- Improve the practice learning experience and so increase student satisfaction
- Demonstrate equity across students, health board areas and Edinburgh Napier staff around practice learning provision
- Enhance the mentors' experience of supporting students before, during and after the experience
- Design a model that has the potential to be rolled out across the faculty

Secondary goals also included to:

- Enhance the staff experience of supporting students on placement
- Further build relationships with our NHS partners
- Improve our current reputation
- Attract the highest calibre of student applicants
- Increase the employability of our graduates

Activity:

The project commenced in May 2013, and had an initial 12 month life span, subsequently extended until December 2014.

Commissioned by Head of School, the Project management team included Jayne Donaldson, Head of School (latterly Susan Key), Janet Smith, Senior Lecturer for Practice Learning (seconded as Project Manager(PM)), with Sustainable Futures providing support for facilitation, coaching, and implementation).

Key project stages included:

- **Analysis**
    - Reviewing and analysing feedback from students, mentors and charge nurses in the 2013NES/NSS/Local Evaluations
    - Convening a project Stakeholder Group (including students, service users and mentors)

- **Redesign**
  - Utilising LEAN methodology, identifying an 'As Is' process map of students practice learning journey from beginning to end (whole day event with all stakeholders).
  - Generating and recording key issues and ideas
  - Completing a follow up day to design the 'Future State' mapping (ideal journey incorporating enhanced quality processes)

- **Implementation**
  - Recommendations and Action Plan developed
  - Presentation of recommendations and action plan welcomed and approved by ENU staff at an All Staff Meeting, Programme Leaders and Senior Staff Research Group
  - Action plan implementation begun

- Return to **business as usual**
  - Work stream being organised to ensure recommendations from the project are incorporated into the Curriculum Review and Redesign
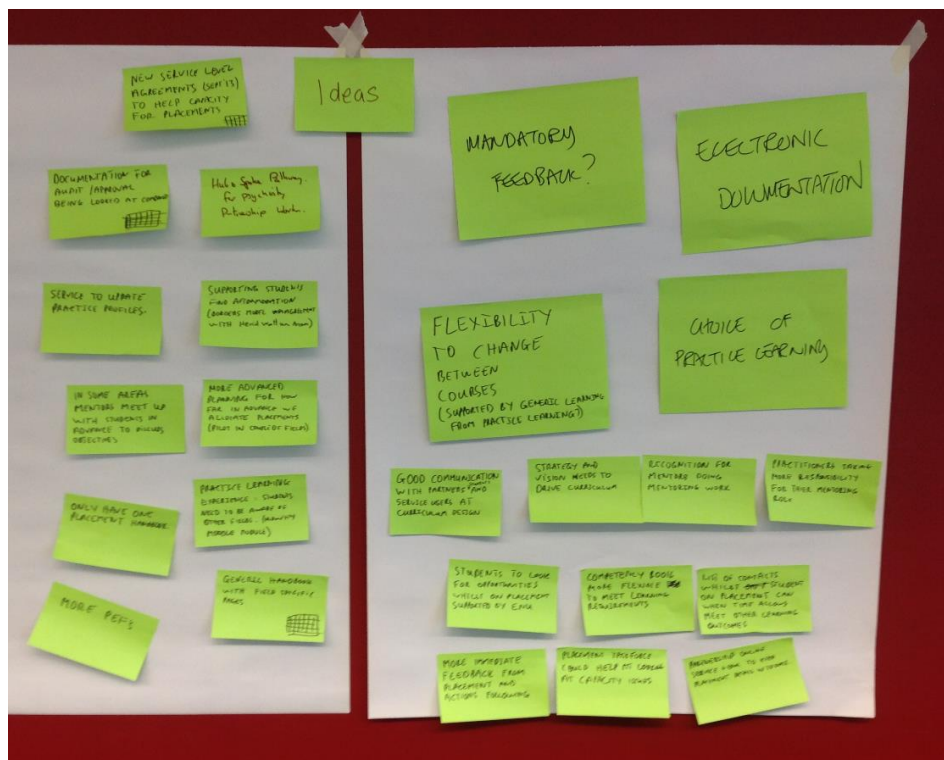
Picture: Some of the ideas generated in project workshops

Feedback on the workshops included:

"Positive move in the right direction, focus on innovation"

"Good to see our interest is in the student journey, hopefully actions will be taken quickly"

"Lots of interesting outcomes; would like to think it will make a positive impact on change.

Outcomes:

Implemented outcomes include:

Interim Assessment

☐ Ensure the midterm assessment is carried out within agreed timescale

☐ Review learning needs and opportunities for remainder of placement

☐ Highlight progression achieved in all domains

☐ Review & ensure that documentation is up to date

☐ Document any concerns you have discussed with the student in regards to their performance

☐ Agree and document an action plan if required

☐ Contact LL/ PEF/CHEF in regard to the action plan if appropriate

☐ Set additional date to review action plan prior to final assessment.

Final Assessment

☐ Overall Pass / Fail result should not be a surprise

☐ Ensure final assessment carried out timely

☐ Review hours card

☐ Review performance in each of the domains

☐ Ensure any ongoing concerns are documented

☐ Ensure all documentation completed include achievement of any AFP, SM and cleanliness champion units

☐ Review students learning plan for next practice learning experience

☐ Consider photocopying your assessment for your own triennial review evidence (ensure confidentiality maintained)

☐ Ask student to complete student evaluation.

After Your Mentorship Role

☐ Reflect on the practice learning experience for your triennial review and consider how has this experienced helped you meet the 8 NMC mentor domains

☐ Complete your own mentor evaluation for contribution to the educational audit.

Mentor Definitions

Mentor:
A registered nurse or midwife who has successfully completed the NMC recognised mentorship preparation programme and can support and assess the competencies of pre-registration students in practice and is recorded on the mentor database.

Co-Mentor:
A Co-Mentor is a registered nurse and may assist the named mentor in supporting students, assessing competencies. This individual is recorded on the local on the Mentor Database and may be the named mentor for another student.

Associate Mentor:
An Associate Mentor is a registered Nurse capable of supporting mentors in assessing individual student competencies, but they are not responsible for the overall assessment of a student and are not registered on the Mentor Database.

Sign-Off Mentor:
A Sign-Off Mentor is a registered nurse or midwife who has successfully completed a Sign off Mentor preparation programme and is recorded as a Sign-Off Mentor on the database. This individual is responsible for assessing a student nurse on their consolidation placement, signing the achievement of the student practice competencies at the completion of their pre-registration programme.

A sign -Off Mentor in midwifery is responsible for assessing midwifery students achievement of practice competencies throughout their pre-registration programme and signing their practice documentation to record achievement of these competencies.

Additional Information
Further information is available on the SNM&SC Mentorcentre: **staff.napier.ac.uk/mentorcentre**
and Practice Learning & Education Centre **www.napier.ac.uk/ppec**

School of Nursing, Midwifery & Social Care (SNM&SC)

Mentor Checklist

Picture: Checklist for practice learning mentors, one of the project outcomes

- **Checklist**-type practice learning guides for students, mentors, and link lecturers
  - **Students** love the checklists, saying that it really helps them to prepare, making their expectations and responsibilities clear.
  - **Mentors** are excited about their checklist, the group took forward their own design in partnership with practice educators, which means they have ownership of the content, and this ties to the NES standards for practice learning.
  - The industry body **Nursing Education Scotland** are circulating our checklists as an example of best practice nationwide.
  - Annual costs around £770, easily outweighed by the benefits primarily in student experience, but also in **demonstrating an organised approach**, a key historical weakness seen in the National Student Survey

- Consistent **Service Level Agreements** across practice learning providers
  - The **NHS Central Legal Office** have recommended all other Unis and NHS Boards adopt the Edinburgh Napier SLA template

- Enhanced **committee structure** and operations for the Practice Learning Experience Committee
  - This committee now is able to use their time to deal with more appropriate issues to do with practice learning and the changing landscape, identify trends and bigger picture actions.

- Enhanced scrutiny of audit reports line-by-line is now undertaken at the sub-committee level
  - This is resulting in tighter governance, enhanced issue management, specifically regarding concerns about practice for students or providers.
  - We have greater assurance that students will be informed that any issues they raise will be progressed (even if the nature of the actions taken can't be shared).

- Recommendations for **3 year projections for student number**s accepted by the Scottish Government
  - Meaning we can better plan for, among other things, student practice learning capacity

- **1 year allocation** of practice learning now provided
  - This is a step towards 3 year allocation of practice learning, enabling the students to better plan their year ahead, and affording mentors and link lecturers a greater insight into the context the practice learning experience they manage.

- **E-portfolios**
  - Feedback from our partners is that this is not a priority for them, notably given the limited availability of ICT equipment for general use in practice learning environments.

- Increased **availability of clinical skills** practice in Edinburgh Napier University laboratories
  - Additional sessions have been made available to students

Other actions **to be implemented** or are being implemented include to:
These actions are being taken forward as part of the post-project implementation

- Improve **back office systems** for managing practice learning
- Create clear understanding of **allocation process** to share with our partners
- Review of all practice learning **documentation**
- Update **Audit and Evaluation** documentation
- Update the connections between practice learning and **quality** processes
- Ensure appropriate **capacity** moving forward
- Continue to implement **Hub and Spoke**

The difference involving Sustainable Futures made:

Facilitation for redesign workshops

Their involvement in project workshops in terms of the facilitation on the day, and session design and follow up, which meant we remained outcome focussed, and inclusive (ensuring everyone was brought into the discussion).

Coaching and Implementation support

This helped keep the project manager focussed given a lot of other activity going on; a regular fortnightly meeting meant that the PM felt well supported, and worked to be regularly delivering outputs.

Bringing humour, analogies, using different approaches to present how we could do things made it much easier to understand the process and move things forward.

Having support to undertake flexibility in the roles of Sustainable Futures to support in other areas meant that the project moved forward; for example in assisting with the concept and implementation of communications around the project (checklists, posters, etc).

In giving me the tools and skills, and relationships with colleagues (Andrew S) to continue to work at the pace that we had, the guys meant that when they took a step back from the project, I was able to continue to keep the momentum up.

Colleague feedback: "[PM has] demonstrated tremendous leadership skills"

Lessons applied

One of the key risks we identified was the **level of workload** that the PM was under. This risk was realised, as a contributing factor to the PM having some health problems. This has been successfully managed.

On reflection, the PM would have been more assertive about prioritising workload as appropriate, and, SF should reflect on ways to support similar PM's in future to do this.

This lesson has been applied, in the PM more actively ensuring their resource is managed appropriately to maintain support for business as usual activity (ensuring we do not compromise the services we offer our current students, even while we work to improve for our future students). However, this means there is a risk of lack of support for further stages of this project.

SharePoint was never really used by the PM. They find it difficult to navigate; this may be linked to the PM's experience with their School SharePoint Site, which they do not find user friendly.

Stable, regular and reliable contact with Sustainable Futures was important.

PM reports that there were a number of added benefits in terms of technical hints and tips passed on by working with Sustainable Futures. She feeds back that without the involvement of Sustainable Futures the project would not have achieved as much as it has, within the time it has been operating.

Feedback from colleagues in the school about the project is overwhelmingly positive:

"I can't believe how much has been done… actually implemented not just talked about… as a result of this project!"