

Developing an Evidence Based Practice Course in a Hurry!
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Problem:

Continuing professional development programmes for health professionals are quite a challenge! Students are usually adult learners with a variety of learning styles, different academic experiences and a range of professional and educational skill sets. Commissioned to provide a short EBP course within a 6-month time frame which addressed these needs, how could we meet this challenge?

Evidence:

A survey (1) of higher education provision of EBP in the UK revealed that the majority of courses are based around Sackett's (2) 5-steps of EBP. Health professionals, however, are able to learn best when they situate their learning within the context of Healthcare (3). In addition, the development of the programme reflected our understanding of the value of variation in learning (4,5); in particular, that blended learning (using a mix of technology with face-to-face and work-based learning) can promote self-confidence in the learning context, enhance motivation and support deeper learning (6-8).

Strategy:

To deliver an EBP course that pairs the EBP steps with clinically relevant case scenarios, embedded in a blended learning experience to address mixed ability and learning styles.

Practice Change:

Adapting established learning materials to reflect diversity in participation and delivery.

Evaluation:

Outcome measures included: Pre and post course knowledge, confidence and attitude change using a validated tool, with participants' subjective experiences elicited through online feedback questionnaires, rapid appraisals after each contact day and informal verbal feedback.

Results:

A review of the development and delivery of the CPD programme found that there were many advantages and some disadvantages of blended learning for an interprofessional continuing professional development course.

Recommendations:

With appropriate experience, support and enough motivation it is possible to develop a course in 6 months! Pairing of a work-based problem with academic training provides a useful form of effective integration. Future development of methods for researching the effectiveness of knowledge and practice change over time should be incorporated.

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