



Digital Excellence Impact Case Studies

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Using Blackboard Collaborate to Facilitate
Assessment for Psychological Wellbeing Practice

by Deborah Rafter

Planning
Your
Module



Introducing
Your Module
to Students



Structuring
Your
Content



Design,
Collaboration
and
Construction
of Knowledge



Formative:
Putting Your
Learning into
Application



Designing Your
Summative
Assessment



Concluding
Your
Module





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“Digital Excellence to me is about equipping students with transferable skills to ensure that their therapy is more accessible for the people that need it”

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Previously these assessments were facilitated in the classroom setting and recorded by free standing cameras. Due to the closure of the University as a result of the Covid pandemic the team adapted and devised a way of conducting the assessments on Collaborate.

In 2008 the Improving Access to Psychological Therapies project began in order to improve the capacity of the psychological therapy services for people with common mental health problems in the UK. The psychological wellbeing practitioner role was created as part of this project in order to support the delivery of psychological therapies within a stepped care system.

The stepped care system is promoted by the National Institute for Health and Care Excellence (NICE) which works on the principle of offering the least intrusive and most effective treatment (low intensity interventions) in the first instance and increasing the intensity of treatment as required. This accredited programme provides education and training that meets the requirements of the Department of Health Curriculum for Psychological Wellbeing Practitioners. The course is part time, 45 days in total, divided equally between three modules and across a 12-month duration. Each module is 15 weeks long with combined taught university and guided practice learning days every week. All students work within functioning Improving Access to Psychological Therapy (IAPT) services with the aim to develop the practical skills associated with the theoretical context.

Two of the summative assessments in module one are role play simulations. During this the student conducts a mental health assessment and the role of the client is played by an actor. These actors are either people from the university, ex-students or clinicians who work in practice. The actors are all provided with a case scenario which details specific symptoms of either anxiety or depression.

The students and the actor were given a time and their own room on Collaborate to facilitate the session, whilst a member of staff assessed the role play with their cameras and microphones turned off. The assessments were also recorded. This enabled staff to live mark the session. To achieve a pass the student has to demonstrate competence in a number of areas and so were responsible for managing the assessment session from start to finish – as they would in the clinical setting. This proved to be successful. Clinical services have also had to adapt their practice and now offer online working to clients, so by facilitating the summative assessments in this way helped to develop the students skills in this modality. Students were able to replicate the experience fully in the workplace.

Some feedback from students included “Our service use 'Attend Anywhere' so using Collaborate has prepared me for this type of assessment in the future.” and “I found the online role play really effective and didn't hinder my progression at all, even when assessing clients in person.”

Due to the success of this and positive feedback from students and clinical services, permanent changes have been made to the course to incorporate key elements of online learning. These are now approved by the University and the course will be delivered through a range of classroom, workplace and e-learning strategies using a blended approach to learning and teaching.

Roleplay simulation assessments through Collaborate has proved to be effective in terms of developing competency and the skills of the students, easy access for the student to reflect upon the roleplay by viewing the recording and also easily accessible for External Examiners. Other benefits include time management and organisation for staff and actors and this format mirrors clinical practice so the skills developed and assessed remain transferable and appropriate.