

Reflective Practice Student Journals

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Synopsis:

The Physiotherapy Clinical Education Team, Notre Dame, develops and fosters reflective practice skills in their students on clinical placement, from as early as first year of the degree course. They have been innovative in their development of an assessed framework in an online medium, scaffolded from first year pre-clinical hours to final year formal placements. The assessed framework has assisted graduates, now 'reflective practitioners' in their transition into the work place.

Award application excerpt:

The three members of the Clinical Education Team at Notre Dame all commenced their posts in 2007. The physiotherapy program was growing and with it, the variety and location of clinical placements. Students out on clinical placement, as remote as Kununurra in the East Kimberley, were expected to complete a hard copy journal with 15 entries over 5 weeks, for only a pass/fail grade. Journals were frequently not completed or handed in late. Students were not motivated to complete the task and were certainly not engaging in activities to assist with their development of the Notre Dame graduate attribute of 'critical and reflective thinking'.

As experienced clinicians, we realised the importance of 'reflection in practice' in developing capable, competent and work ready clinicians. We all entered into the first module of the Graduate Certificate of University Teaching and Learning and like our students were asked to reflect on our actions.

Writing a reflective journal has given me great insight into the relevance of this mode of assessment. Currently in all our clinical placements, students write a reflective journal but it is not assessed. Knowing our reflective journal was to be assessed made me take the re-thinking very seriously and therefore helped me gain insights and revelations into how to improve...In discussion with our Associate Dean and as a direct result of this unit, the clinical education team now has permission to assess the clinical practice reflective journals! (Reflective Journal by a member of the Clinical Education Team, May 2009)

From 2009 we went about developing an assessed, structured framework for our students to follow while on clinical placement. In 2012, this framework is scaffolded over all four years of the degree course, and our graduates recently confirmed the benefits of this assessed task as they develop into both qualified physiotherapists and reflective practitioners.