



Value-Added Day Release Course

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Background

The introduction of the nMRCGP, and in particular the CSA (Clinical Skills Assessment) component, has seen a distinct shift in teaching on the general practice day release courses towards preparing trainees for the assessment. This has been compounded by the perceptions of need of those failing the exam. During the specialist trainee year three, trainees have historically worked within a small groups which they remain in throughout the year. It was noted by the facilitators that trainees passing the CSA found themselves in groups with trainees who continued to want to practise skills in preparation for the CSA, creating a mismatch in learning needs.

Summary of work

After the February CSA results, the groups were rearranged to take account of those who had passed. The trainees who had not passed continued to focus on communication and consultation skills. For those passing, five sessions of 'Value-Added' small group work were planned. The sessions were resourced and led by the trainees:

- Planning
- Alternative medicine
- A topical debate
- Exploring careers
- Faith in healthcare

A key aim was to focus on establishing and developing the learning needs of the trainees at the end of their training and to promote self-directedness.

Summary of results

The sessions were evaluated using feedback from the trainees and facilitators. The feedback from the trainees on the learning from each of the sessions individually was very positive. They felt that the sessions were valuable and should be part of the core training.

- It was very interesting and useful. A lot of topics were covered in a short period of time.
- It was very interactive and thought stimulating.
- Well organised ++, Fantastic session, interactive.

Findings also suggested that some trainees were not ready to embrace self directed learning in their post exam 'honeymoon' period:

- Difficult to organise as working as well as trying to do the e-portfolio /out of hours, but worthwhile discussing.
- Supervisor needs to realise time constraints and that religious leaders didn't want to come so outcome of open discussion about experience and religions from trainees themselves was better.

whereas others embraced it:

- Very self-directed, surprised how much people had managed to do given that it was such a busy e-portfolio time.
- It was good, challenging and hard work – useful.

Learning needs

There was a definite change in the trainees' perceived learning needs (LNs) over the course of the sessions. They appeared to change from those of trainees to those of newly-qualified GPs.

Learning Needs Pre-Value Added

- Better understanding of Business
- Requirements to qualify
- Marketing yourself
- Alternatives to GP day job
- Appraisal and revalidation
- Time management
- Avoiding burnout
- Group support post-CCT

Learning Needs Post-Value Added

- Time management
- Leadership
- Prioritisation
- Self-learning
- Teaching skills

Conclusion

The sessions did not always have the outcome the facilitators anticipated. The trainees did not engage in the planning of the sessions as had been hoped. Some were resistant to being self-directed and to taking responsibility for the sessions. Whilst they all embraced the clinical learning, some missed the 'Value-Added' aspects.

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