About the Module

This course was born out of a need to provide students with opportunities to get to know people as more than just people with clinical problems. To achieve this, students meet with people in their everyday environment across an extended period of time through a community organisation.

In first year, students spend time getting to know another person; in second year they are also required to facilitate a person’s engagement in a meaningful occupation of the person’s choice. It is a compulsory credit-bearing (5 ECTs) module for both first and second year students demanding direct engagement for approximately two hours each week of the academic year. In second year, according to student preferences, they are assigned to placements that have been generated by module coordinators; while first year students generate their own placement opportunities.

Student feedback is used informally but regularly to inform community organisations regarding progress. Small group weekly classroom debriefing sessions plus, for second year, weekly worksheet reflections support students’ learning. At the end of year, students are assessed through a presentation that requires relating their learning on personal, academic and civic levels to discipline theory.

Benefits

“As this course offers students their first real experience with people in the community, usually living in a different world to their own, students use this experience to make sense of learning in other courses.”
Lecturer in Applied Psychology

“Knowing how to replace students who have developed a relationship with the person they visit and keep their work together going.”
Homelessness Organisation

“Many of the people students visit have restricted lifestyles due to disability; this challenges the students’ creativity in developing collaborative relationships and in getting involved in activities together.”
Senior Freshman Student

“Communicating with community partners that students’ role and purpose in service learning is different to that when on practice education/clinical placement.”
Coordinator of Senior Freshmen Experiences

Tips for Colleagues

• From the start, enter into dialogue with community partners, making very clear the purpose of the course, and finding a common ground.

• Be available to students to support their debriefing.

• Be aware that coordinating such courses are demanding and time consuming, both administratively and in relationship development and management.

For further information
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