

# Building blogs: creating a space for learning on placement

Vic Boyd, Stephanie McKendry, Siobhan Fairhurst  
**Glasgow Caledonian University**



# Overview

- Developing the GCU Nursing Student blog
- What worked?
- Evaluation
- Blogger reflections

# A short history of blogging

- Offers agency and control to the contributor as a tool to capture / share the longitudinal experiential journey through online narrative (Pachler and Daly 2009).
- Strengths in encouraging students to engage in ongoing reflection and analysis, and in enabling students to think holistically about the context of their learning (through making links to both internal and external content) (Ferdig and Trammel 2004).
- Usefulness in engaging students at risk of isolation (notably distance learning students (Dickey 2004)).

# The nursing student blog - background

To provide:

- an accessible, moderated, interactive space for students to share experiences.
- remote access to academic development materials whilst students were on placement.
- scope to facilitate peer support.
- 'real life' nursing biographies to support development of professional identity and foster engagement with institution.

<http://blogs.spokenword.ac.uk/nurseblog/>

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## Archive for October, 2010

# Welcome to the GCU School of Health's student nurse blog

General, News, School of Health, Student nurse

No Comments »

This site is written and developed by current nursing students and Vic and Steph (Academic Development Tutors) in order to provide advice and support to new students as they embark upon their first placement experiences.

You have probably only just got used to life at university: made some good friends, discovered the best place on campus to sit with a coffee... and now you are off into the clinical area, putting into practise the theory you've been learning in classes. This site will help you get the most out of your time on placement. It contains hints and tips from current students, reflections and diary entries of their experiences and advice on particular issues and topics. We've even got an agony aunt! The site will be updated, with new material developed between now and December, so keep checking in to see what's been added.

We would also like to invite you to participate in the site. So comment on blog entries. Add your own thoughts and advice. Let us know how you are getting on. You can email [studySMART@gcu.ac.uk](mailto:studySMART@gcu.ac.uk), post a reply to entries or phone Vic and Steph if you would like to get even more involved. As we said earlier, this site is by and for students and should be constantly changing, so use it whilst you are out on placement as a way of keeping in touch with Caley.

Finally, being on placement is doubly complicated because your assessments don't stop. You

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## Blogger profiles

Breige



[Breige's Tanzanian Adventure](#)

Comfort



Hi! I'm Comfort, a 2nd year Mental Health Nursing student. Really enjoying the course so far. Funnily enough I'm scared of the sight of blood. Currently on a branch-specific placement, which is very interesting.

[Taking blood pressure on placement](#)

Heather



[A warm welcome from Heather and Kay](#)

Kay

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## Diary of an oncology placement

Clinical skills, Placement, Portfolio, School of Health, Student nurse

1 Comment »

One of the blog student writers shares their experiences of learning on an oncology placement. Participation in all clinical procedures took place with full supervision and the consent of all patients/ clients involved.

### Day One

First day of placement so got orientated to the ward and introduced to members of staff. I assisted in the drug rounds, and assisted in drawing up and administering controlled drugs to a few patients. I helped make the beds, do the meals and carried out obs on a blood transfusion patient.

### Day Four

Helped make the beds and assisted with meals, did obs on many of the patients and assisted with the drug round. Watched a dressing being removed and the wound redressed while getting information on the type of dressing the nurse was using and why.

### Day Five

Assisted with meals and making beds then did obs on patients routinely and also those receiving Chemotherapy. Carried out a bed bath on a patient who is immobile and suffering from bed sores. Put 3 lines in ready for Chemotherapy and assisted one patient to X-Ray and one patient to Ultrasound...getting to see the procedures being carried out.

### Day Nine

Watched a PICC line getting put in today with a full explanation from my mentor on why patients get them in situ. Gave out breakfasts, lunches and dinners, watched an enema being given and got information about drugs used and on using the BNF, added them into a Word document so I know which drugs we use and why.

### Day Ten

Gave out breakfast, lunch and dinners, assisted a patient with showering, admitted a patient onto our ward, gave bloods to a patient- including running the line through first, watched a venflon being put in and got an explanation as to the procedure and deep cleaned a room as it was contaminated with MRSA.

### Day Thirteen

Today I helped with the drug rounds, meal times and obs on patients. I also removed a PICC

## Poor referencing – examples

Accurate referencing is important in academic work for a number of reasons. Your academic writing will include references in order to show where evidence has come from, and also to demonstrate your knowledge on a topic by showing how widely you have read. Accurate referencing is also key in avoiding plagiarism (the unsubstantiated use of an author's work) and making sure that all work you submit is your own.

The following examples show some common mistakes in referencing:

### Example 1

(McDuff, 1999) Regular exercise and a well-balanced diet are believed by many to be the cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle. Cross has argued that it is important to educate school children about the benefits of keeping active and eating well from an early age, in order to inform choices in adulthood. 'Knowing what nutrients differing foods contain enables individuals to take control of their diet and promote overall improved health'. (Jones, Wright, Davis and Evans, 2000).

- *The first reference is not in the correct position. If you are not referring to the author within the sentence, it is best to put in the reference **after** the information.*
- *There is a date missing for the second reference.*
- *It is not clear where the quote comes from. Is it Jones et al? Where is the page number?*

*It would be correct if the following was changed:*

Regular exercise and a well-balanced diet are believed by many to be the cornerstones of a healthy lifestyle (McDuff, 1999). Cross (2010) has argued that it is important to educate school children about the benefits of keeping active and eating well from an early age, in order to inform choices in adulthood. According to Jones et al, 'Knowing what nutrients differing foods contain enables individuals to take control of their diet and promote overall improved health' (2000, p. 105)

### Example 2

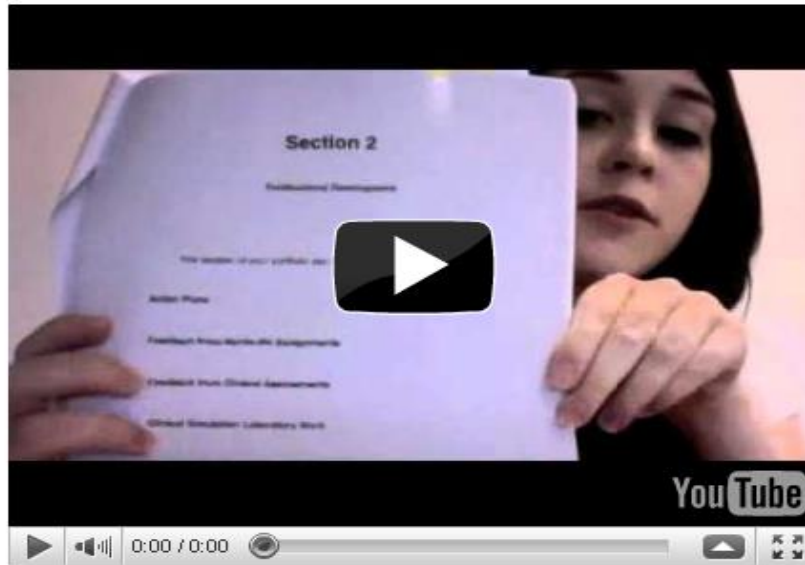
Ongoing debate has surrounded the nature of alternative therapies for many years (Journal of Advanced Nursing 2008). J. Mayer's research (Mayer, J, 2008) makes note of a diversity of complementary techniques which are practiced outwith the traditional setting of hospitals, and which take an holistic approach to improving the wellbeing of the individual. Last year, a 27% increase in new businesses which categorised themselves as providing alternative therapies was reported.



## Heather's guide to planning your portfolio (DipHE/BN)

GCU, Portfolio, School of Health, Student nurse

5 Comments »



November 2nd, 2010

## Welcome to the GCU School of Health's student nurse blog

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No Comments »

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# Discussion

- In your own discipline or area, have you used similar remote support?
- If yes, could you share some of the successes/ challenges?
- In no, is there an area within your discipline where you can see applicability?

# What worked?

Aspects of the blog which we factored in to promote engagement:

- Informality
- Timeliness
- Variety
- Detail
- 'Real life' nursing
- Publicity

# Student evaluation

- Mid-November 2010 to mid-January 2011 the blog received over 1,600 hits.
- 470 views of video material.
- 85%\* of students who said they had accessed the blog rated it useful or very useful.
- 68% agreed that the academic development materials helped them complete their assessments
- 70% said that the student contributions improved their understanding of placement and the placement experience.

\* n=110 of 205 students who responded to a paper based evaluation questionnaire.

# Blogger reflections

- Motivations – to be of use, share, have fun.

*So I thought, it would be quite good to get involved and like, get other students in newer years to see how, maybe we experienced it and share our experience and give them tips.... To be of use on campus.*

- Public nature of media – initially intimidating, but later empowering.

*Because it was me actually on the screen, they could actually see who I was , and at first I was like ‘oh my God, if my friends see this...’ but it was like, do you know what, I enjoyed it, it was fun.. It was just a laugh, you know, giving information at the same time but... I thought it was really good after I got over the initial embarrassment.*

# Blogger reflections

- Useful resource – value in learning from experienced students.

*You do want to hear it from the horse's mouth so to speak....  
Somebody going 'och well actually this is how I felt emotionally, this is how I felt mentally, this is how I got through it, this is who I went to', you're kind of more likely to believe that it works from another student.*

*Cos I always find myself looking to older students and saying 'how did you do this?'*

- Learning opportunity – reflection, developing writing skills for diverse audience.

# Blogger reflections

- Enhanced or reinforced confidence – empowerment, protected space, maintained own voice throughout editing.

*I literally hate reading my own stuff, so I was a bit nervous, I was like 'oh God, people are...' I felt exposed in a way, but... It was also good in a way cos you're helping someone...*

*I loved it. I felt important!*

*It's just nice to vent, in a ... professional way, but it's nice to go 'blaaa... This is how I'm feeling'... And I think it was really good for mental health, it was really good to say, 'I'm alright actually, I know loads'*

- Acknowledgment of expectation of multimedia in learning.

# Discussion

- To what extent does student expectation drive delivery format?
- How can this inform design/ innovation?
- How reusable are reusable learning objects?



# What's next?

- Continued use of blog with focus on reflective writing and linking clinical experiences to theory for 3<sup>rd</sup> year students.
- Staff evaluation?
- Shared student space for reflection, publication? Unsolicited pieces sent to us for consideration

# Any questions?



# Contact details

## **Stephanie Mckendry**

Glasgow Caledonian University, School of Health  
stephanie.mckendry@gcal.ac.uk  
0141 331 3450

## **Vic Boyd**

Glasgow Caledonian University, School of Health  
victoria.boyd@gcal.ac.uk  
0141 331 3481