



Assessment & Learning in Practice Settings

1. ALPS Introduction

For the benefit of new readers, and as a reminder to everyone else...ALPS is a collaborative programme between five Higher Education Institutions with proven reputations for excellence in learning and teaching in health and social care: the universities of Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds (lead); Leeds Metropolitan and York St John. There are 16 professions across the partnership from Audiology to Social Work and a wide range of partners including NHS Yorkshire and the Humber Strategic Health Authority, clinical networks and professional bodies.

ALPS mission is to build on existing strengths across the partnership to ensure that students graduating from courses in health and social care are fully equipped to perform confidently and competently at the start of their professional careers so improving the standards of care.

2. ALPS First Year Reflections

At the end of the first year of ALPS it is important and useful to reflect on the progress we have made. Many academic researchers comment that the next worst thing to not getting a particular grant is actually being successful because then you actually have to do the work! So it was with me, the realisation of the enormity of what we said we would do was frankly very daunting. Everything seemed to take longer than expected. Writing the job descriptions for the posts in the ALPS Core Team, recruiting talented individuals who shared your vision all took an amazing amount of time. Writing the strategic plan and then converting this into the operational plan was not easy for someone with my background. The help and support of Trish Walker, ALPS Programme Manager, was invaluable. Other challenges have included getting talented individuals not only from very different health and social care disciplines to work together but also allowing for the fact that they also came from very different higher education cultures. These differences have not only made things more challenging but also been fundamental in shaping my own development as Director. It has also meant that we have been able to call on a much greater pool of expertise and enthusiasm.

So, at the end of year one, where are we? The Core Competency team – under the leadership of Jo Mallows and Sara Eastburn have made real progress in the area of communication skills – chosen because we thought it might be easy to start with. How wrong we were! We have had a very helpful and supportive meeting with the Professional Regulators – getting them all together in one room was amazing enough but working together in small groups - astounding. We have also trialled several IT pilots using different electronic hardware and the IT group have shown us what exciting possibilities will be available to us and our students in the future. Even I now know what Wikis and Blogs are (I think) thanks to John Sandars!!

There have been challenges and problems, areas such as the Virtual Knowledge Park continue to exercise us. However, taken over all I feel we have made real progress and are now really working together as ALPS and not merely collaborating as institutions. I am very grateful to everyone who is making this happen, particularly of course the ALPS Core Team but also the chairs of the Management Groups and the Partner Site Implementation Groups. The next phase of ALPS will probably be the most exciting and it will only be successful because of the strong foundations we have built in our first year. I'm looking forward to year two with the thrill of knowing that we are doing work at the cutting edge of education which makes me very proud to be part of ALPS.

In the next bulletin we plan to give you an update of ALPS activity which may be useful to you if you are promoting ALPS in the academic or practice setting.

(Professor Trudie Roberts, ALPS Director)

3. ALPS Events Reports

i) Working in Partnership: ALPS and the Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies

ALPS recently met with the Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs) of the sixteen professional subjects involved with the programme. The aims of the seminar were to provide participants with the opportunity to:

- develop understanding of the ALPS programme and its relationship with the PSRBs for professional regulation purposes
- establish a spirit of partnership between the PSRBs and ALPS
- identify strategies to work with PSRBs to take ALPS forward
- identify potential barriers to implementing inter-professional assessment
- identify preferred mechanisms, including effective communication, for future engagement

The seminar provided the opportunity to consult the PSRBs on the general direction of the ALPS programme of work. As a result of the consultation it was agreed that ALPS and the PSRBs would continue to consult in order to address the issues raised. A second meeting is planned for 2007 when the results of the pilot projects of assessment of common competences will be shared.

Details of the issues and presentations discussed on the day are available at:

<http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/PSRBmeeting13Sept06.html>

ii) 'Informing the next Phase: an ALPS Workshop'

Around thirty members of the ALPS partners and Core Team recently met to review the work of the ALPS Mobile Pilots.

The morning session was dedicated to presentations from the five ALPS partners on their mobile pilot projects which included the use of Personal Digital Assistants (PDAs), mobile phones and blogs in various aspects of assessment. The afternoon session was devoted to using this information to inform the future direction for the ALPS programme and its use of devices in practice which will be published shortly.

The ALPS Core Team would like to thank everybody who attended for their excellent contribution to making the day useful and informative.

iii) Symposium on Medical Interactive e-Learning (SMILE 2006)

Gareth Frith, Mobile Technologies Project Manager, attended the SMILE (Symposium on Medical Interactive e-Learning) workshop in Genoa which was part of the AMEE (Association for Medical Education in Europe) conference. The SMILE workshop focussed on Teaching and Learning in Medical Education.

The presentations were useful and highlighted the fact that there is a great deal of work being done around e-learning, portfolios, assessment and general clinical skills. However the work being done on assessment in practice is very small. There is a focus on clinical skills but not on core competencies such as communication and ethics and this highlighted the embryonic nature of the ALPS work. <http://www.amee.org/conf06smile.html>

4. ALPS Updates

i) Common Competency Mapping

A Common Competences working group was established in June to progress work on:

- developing a shared and agreed understanding and definition of the common areas (communication skills, team working, ethical practice - starting with communication)
- defining and agreeing the framework for common competency mapping and assessment.

The work of the group is supported by a wider consultation group- the Interest Group, across the ALPS partnership, who feed in professional and institutional information.

We have commissioned MyKnowledgeMap to assist in establishing a methodology and building a framework for mapping common competences and assessments. It was agreed to make use of the company's wide-ranging experience in skills and competency mapping and analysis within healthcare and professional education.

By mid-October it is anticipated that we will have a structure which breaks down the competences into smaller elements and criteria for assessment. These will differentiate between generic competencies and those which are profession specific. We will then progress the work in developing assessment tools which could be delivered via the mobile technologies. We expect to be piloting these first assessments with students during January/ February 2007.

ii) Mobile Technologies

The procurement plan for the mobile technologies involvement of ALPS has been undertaken by purchasing products and services from a mix of University services, ALPS partner teams and commercial organisations. ALPS have engaged with the following organisations who will work with us to develop our work:

- Blackboard / WEBCT
- MyKnowledgeMap (MKM)
- WirelessCiC
- University of Leeds Library
- Leeds Metropolitan University
- York St John University
- EMC Documentum / SynApps solutions

For more detailed information on how these organisations will be working with us please look at the website <http://www.alps-cetl.ac.uk/currentwork.htm>

iii) University of Bradford Pilot update

The Bradford IT pilot was completed in July 2006. The Bradford team felt that overall this had been very successful with much learning, and some fun, along the way! Our key learning points for using mobile technology for assessment of practice purposes are that training for students, HEI and clinical staff will be paramount and that IT support will be crucial. This will be different to that offered today because of the mobile nature of the technology, which means that students and staff will need support at home and in clinical placements. Crucially however, we also realised the absolute necessity of assessment documents being web-based so that data is not lost if the device is lost or stolen. In addition to these issues, the huge challenge that lies ahead for ALPS, in terms of culture change, was highlighted as students reported varied responses to the mobile devices among themselves and by clinical colleagues.

The outcomes of this pilot were well received by an international audience at the Third Biennial Joint Northumbria/EARLI SIG Assessment Conference in August http://northumbria.ac.uk/cetl_afl/assessment2006/, and will be presented at the MLearn Conference in Banff, Canada in October 2006 <http://www.mlearn2006.org/>

John Fairhall, the mobile technologist who worked tirelessly on the project, will be presenting this paper and we wish him well.

Where do we go from here? We are hoping to develop stage two of the pilot to incorporate use of an e-portfolio accessed by the mobile devices. We hope to involve the same student group, who are now in the second year of their midwifery degree programme. This is in the early stages of planning, so watch this space!

(C Dearnley, Bradford PSIG Lead)

5. Departures & New Appointments

(i) Dr. Janet Hargreaves is Associate Dean for Learning and Teaching in the School of Human and Health Sciences at the University of Huddersfield. Janet has taken over the lead for the ALPS programme in the School from Dr. Cathy Doggett, who is moving to the position of Head of Centre for the University Centre at Barnsley. Janet has a background in adult general nursing, having been a theatre sister at the Northern General Hospital in Sheffield. She has 20 years of experience in education, having worked at the then Sheffield School of Nursing, Sheffield Hallam University and the University of Leeds prior to her current role. Janet's teaching and scholarly interests are in health care ethics and education. As the strategic lead for learning and teaching and for Interprofessional Learning in the School she is looking forward with enthusiasm to greater involvement with the ALPS programme.

(ii) Sara Eastburn will be leaving Leeds Metropolitan University and taking up the position of Head of Division of Rehabilitation at the University of Huddersfield from 1st November. Sara will continue to work with Janet Hargreaves and other colleagues at Huddersfield on ALPS activities and continue to Chair the Common Competency Mapping Working Group. Karen Bird and Kate Grafton will, together, replace Sara at Leeds Metropolitan on physiotherapy-related ALPS activities.

6. Forthcoming Events Listing

The 4th University of Leeds Learning and Teaching Conference – University of Leeds, 5 January 2007

We are delighted to have secured a limited number of places especially for the ALPS partners to attend the 4th University of Leeds, Learning and Teaching Conference, to be held on Friday 5th January 2007. The focus of the conference: 'Deliver excellent and inspirational learning and teaching' is one of the seven key themes of the University's Strategy Map. Full details of the conference including an outline programme for the day and details of the abstracts for all of the sessions can be found on the Conference website at:

<http://www.lts.leeds.ac.uk/news/events/conference.htm>. If you are interested in attending please contact the ALPS team directly at alps@leeds.ac.uk.

Bringing Research & Teaching Together – Millennium Gloucester Hotel, London, 24 November 2006

This conference will appeal to policy makers, senior university staff and Pro Vice Chancellors for research and for teaching & learning. The aims will be to develop ideas and strategies for UK research & enquiry programmes. To register see http://www.heacademy.ac.uk/events/List_4752.htm

UK E Learning in Medical Education Conference - Royal College of General Practitioners, London, 3 November 2006

E-Learning is a highly efficient way of training junior doctors, reducing the duplication of resources and enabling senior practitioners to better monitor their students. With e-Learning training you can track the progress of students, identify weak areas for further development and give quicker assessment and feedback. Top industry speakers include; -Dr. Michael Bannon, Dean, Oxford Postgraduate Medical and Dental Education, Dr. Andrew Long, Associate Medical Director, Princess Royal University Hospital, Dr. John Sandars, Medical Education Unit, University of Leeds. To register see <http://www.123doc.com/conferences.php>

Challenging the orthodoxies: alternative approaches to educational research – Covent Garden, London, 7 December 2006

The Centre for Learning and Quality Enhancement at Middlesex University is pleased to announce that this year's conference 'Challenging the orthodoxies: alternative approaches to educational research' will take place on 7 December at the New Connaught Rooms, Covent Garden, London.

The format of the day will include challenging debates on research methodology and the conference will be the same as last year with all the papers available in advance and the speakers each having ten minutes in which to talk to their papers. This means that most of the time will be given over to participant discussion in small groups. Please contact Karen Ridout on k.ridout@mdx.ac.uk or telephone 0208 411 5018.

7. Future Bulletins

The overall aim of the Bulletin is to keep colleagues up to date and involved with the work of the ALPS Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning and associated projects, networks and resources.

We are looking for keen readers **and** contributors to the Bulletin, in order to make it a valuable, relevant, collective resource. You can contribute by emailing the ALPS Core Team at alps@leeds.ac.uk with brief details of events, links to articles and other information - basically any news and information that you think might be of interest. The Bulletin is published every 6-8 weeks, and is available in Word, PDF formats and via the ALPS website.

We'd be delighted if you would forward this Bulletin to your colleagues. Equally, if you've received this in error, or if you don't wish to remain on our circulation list please let us know – alps@leeds.ac.uk.

Deadlines for contributions:

Monday 27 November 2006

Monday 8 January 2007

8. ALPS Key Contacts

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