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Embedding the concept of competency maps to improve the student learning experience and their preparation for work based learning and employability

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Summary

This poster describes an innovative collaborative project between two Centres of Excellence for Teaching and Learning. The Institute for Enterprise based at Leeds Metropolitan University used the process and model devised by the ALPS CETL for their communication, ethical practice and teamworking competency maps to devise their own map which illustrated enterprise skills. The process used to develop the map is detailed along with its uses for students and staff. Tips for the project's process and pedagogy are outlined. The completed work and mapping is evidence of successful interprofessional and cross CETL working.

The process

The common competencies of communication, teamwork and ethical practice were identified in all course programmes along with a description of how these key skills were assessed. Professional body representation was also included in the ALPS team. Further input was provided by an external company MyKnowledgeMap® (MKM) who generated the visually interactive tool. The ultimate aim of the model which transferred the ALPS map to enterprise skills was to enhance the visibility of enterprise skills in modules and curricula thus prioritising enterprise and employability skills and giving Leeds Met graduates the edge in the current global economic climate. The generation of the enterprise map, its clusters, and dimension statements had a narrower project remit and was a more manageable process compared to the generation of the 3 ALPS maps (across 5 HEIs with 16 professions).
Monthly meetings and consultation were held with wider groups in Faculties and students via questionnaires and meetings.

Background

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The competency maps generated by ALPS identified core interprofessional competencies in the health and social care professions to allow more effective interprofessional placement and academic assessment (Holt et al, 2010). Barrett et al (2003) advise modules for interprofessional learning are planned and delivered by an interprofessional team and Morison and Stewart (2005) designed competencies to support assessment of OSCEs to promote formative feedback between professions. ALPS has been working on the design of innovative assessment tools which provide appropriate assessments for 16 health and social care professions in 3 identified common competencies, communication, teamwork and ethical practice.
Developing collaborative projects for competency tools is not without hazards and pitfalls (Amey and Brown, (2005). Billett et al (2007) state that working in partnership on collaborative competency mapping is complex and requires individuals to find new strategies to work effectively in a collegiate way.

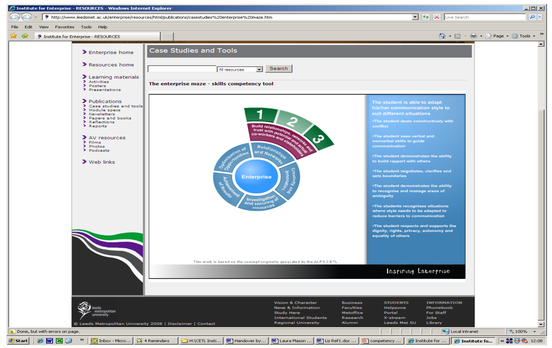
Academic staff can use the competency maps to….

- Develop assessment criteria
- Benchmark placement experiences and allow students to use them via mobile devices on placements
- Aid employer assessment and expectations of graduates for their future careers.
- Enhance curriculum development
- Act as a base line for future research

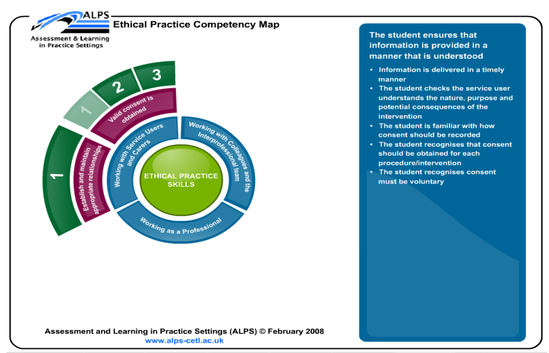
How students use the competency maps

- To prepare themselves for placement expectations
- To identify their knowledge and skills gaps
- To focus on their reflective writing and identify action points for development.
- For self evaluation.. help to identify why situations aren't going so well!
- To enhance employability as graduates.
- To inform their future CPD, professional competencies and key skills.

The enterprise competency map



The ALPS competency map- an example



Top tips for success – pedagogy and process

Discussion between the development teams for both the ALPS and enterprise competency mapping groups generated this list of good practice tips

- Use time as a resource…to reflect on information and understand other's perspectives and to allow the concept to develop freely and slowly
- Depersonalise discussion in the meetings
- Understand that people will use the product in very different ways
- Do not link the competency maps to academic levels- this allows academic staff to develop personalised curricula.
- Clear project plan, terms of reference ground rules and timeline
- Broad reference group including staff, students and service users.
- Equity of Professional representation
- Scoping available information and literature prior to the first meeting.
- Every member should 'have their say' until a common language and understanding develops.
- Clear notes taken by independent facilitator and circulated to reference and email group
- Email consultation throughout with reference group
- Pilot product across subject groups and courses in a guided and structured manner.
- Present finished product in a visually dynamic format

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