



**Issue 9**

**January 2018**

**ISSN: 2051-3593**

**Managing Editor**

Dr. Russell Crawford

**Administrator**

Samantha Mottram

**Telephone**

+44 (0)1782 733007

**Email**

[jade@keele.ac.uk](mailto:jade@keele.ac.uk)

**Web**

<http://jadekeele.wordpress.com/>

**Address**

59-60 The Covert, Keele University, Keele,  
ST5 5BG

**Highlight:**

**Inter-professional learning at Keele - physiotherapy student's perceptions.**

\*Valerie Ball, Lecturer in Physiotherapy, School of Health and Rehabilitation, Keele University

Aniksha Dhamelia, Physiotherapist, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

Elliot Rollason, Physiotherapist, Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

\*correspondence author: [v.ball@keele.ac.uk](mailto:v.ball@keele.ac.uk)

## **Inter-professional learning at Keele - physiotherapy student's perceptions.**

**\*Valerie Ball, Lecturer in Physiotherapy, School of Health and Rehabilitation,  
Keele University**

**Aniksha Dhamelia, Physiotherapist, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust**

**Elliot Rollason, Physiotherapist, Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust**

**\*correspondence author: [v.ball@keele.ac.uk](mailto:v.ball@keele.ac.uk)**

### **Abstract**

Context The Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences Year 3 inter-professional education (IPE) programme promotes effective multi-disciplinary team (MDT) working using group work and reflective writing. Student satisfaction monitored in module evaluations had remained static for five years. This small study aimed to look in more depth at the reasons for this.

Method Two on line focus groups of third year physiotherapy students using a Keele Learning Environment discussion board and a closed Facebook group as means of communication. Data was coded for themes and subthemes

Results All participants reported positive experiences of MDT working in clinical practice, and they preferred to learn on clinical placement rather than in classroom based activities. A minority of participants considered writing reflections for IPE was a positive learning process.

Conclusions The IPE programme does not suit all types of learners and this would account for the static student satisfaction.

### **Key words**

Inter-professional education, reflection, satisfaction.

### **Context and Objectives**

Inter-professional education is defined as 'learning between one or more health professions during their training with the aim of developing skills for collaborative practice in providing holistic patient-centred health care' (CAIPE, 2015). Inter-professional education (IPE) has been embedded at Keele in the undergraduate curricula of the Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences since 2007. It encourages

collaboration in health care by educating students from different professions together. (Cusack and O'Donoghue, 2012).

Students in the first 2 years of health curricula at Keele are taught in small multi-professional groups, this is appropriate as students are still identifying their own and others roles. In contrast Year 3 of IPE is student lead and requires a portfolio of evidence (reflections) to be completed during clinical placements to demonstrate achievement of the IPE3 learning outcomes. This model allows flexibility in the timing and location of achieving each of the outcomes, depending on the student's programme and their individual experience.

Two thirds of IPE 3 module evaluations completed by medicine, midwifery, nursing and physiotherapy students in 2014/15 stated that the IPE programme had prepared them for multi-disciplinary team (MDT) working. This satisfaction rate had remained static for five years. This small study aimed to look in more depth at the reasons for the IPE 3 satisfaction.

## **Methods**

### Design

A set of open questions based on the feedback from the 2014/15 IPE 3 evaluation was constructed. Two separate on-line focus groups were set up, one using a Keele Learning Environment (KLE) discussion board and the second a closed Facebook (FB) group as means of communication. Both groups were open for one week during January/February 2016 with participants responding to other's comments and probing from the researchers.

### Participants

Following ethical approval from the School of Health and Rehabilitation SPEC, 3rd year physiotherapy students were invited to participate by year group email. Students who had not experienced a year 3 clinical placement were excluded. Participants consented using a Google form.

### Analysis

Analytical coding was applied to the data from both groups identifying themes and sub themes which were used to generate conclusions.

## **Results**

Sixteen students participated; 8 in each group. The group characteristics can be seen in Table 1. (insert table 1 here)

### **Higher order theme: Learning**

Sub theme: The best place to learn MDT working.

The participants considered that MDT working was best learnt in the clinical arena. There were several reasons given: Three of the participants described themselves as activist learners and therefore 'doing' was their preferred method of learning, while others required context and saw effective MDT working as a skill needing practice.

P16 *"MDT working skills are practical skills"* KLE

P4 *"working within an MDT while on placement is 100% more beneficial"* FB

Participants commented on the classroom IPE opportunities

P11 *"didn't give a chance to explore how each of us think"* KLE

P7 *"there was very little input from some members of certain professions"* FB

### Sub theme: Reflection

Writing reflections for IPE 3 was seen as an academic task to be completed by a small majority of participants rather than a learning opportunity, summed up by:

P2 *"I don't feel I get much out of writing reflections"* FB

However a significant minority of participants did think the process of writing reflections had a positive benefit that they could take forward into their professional career

P13 *"reflection can help me prepare and deal with situations better if faced again"*  
KLE

### **Higher order theme: Effective MDT working**

The participants commented on their experience of teams working well together

P10 *"decisions are made collaboratively"* KLE

P2 *"the more approachable each member is the easier it makes to collaborate"* FB

### **Discussion**

This study asked the question why IPE 3 satisfaction rates remain static. The results gave some insight into physiotherapy student's perceptions of the Keele IPE programme.

The participants in both groups were less satisfied with the classroom IPE activities than clinical practice experience as preparation for MDT working. Although there is evidence to support the use of class room IPE activities (Cusack & O'Donoghue, 2012), due to the challenges of cross school timetabling, the majority of the Keele IPE learning activities are of short duration or by distance learning. Ponzer et al.

(2004) used a simulated ward area for inter-professional education allowing each student to develop their professional role within a team and emphasise the importance of good communication. However to do this across the faculty would mean significant investment in time and facilities. In contrast, physiotherapy students on clinical placement are placed within a MDT where they can experience inter-professional working over a period of weeks.

The IPE 3 assessment required the production of a portfolio of reflections. Reflection is integral to enabling health professionals to learn from experience. The KLE group were more positive to reflection as a learning opportunity; this could be due to bias caused by communicating through an academic platform. The FB group were less satisfied with reflecting which can be counterproductive for individuals who are less reflective by nature (Boud and Walker, 1998).

Effective MDT working is the aim of the IPE strand; participants valued the clinical placements as the arena to learn the skill. They found this to be a more positive experience when they were immersed within the MDT with regular communication or meetings. This is supported by Mickan (2005) who suggests that well-coordinated groups with good communication are more effective producing better health outcomes.

The results of this study were limited by the researchers' lack of experience running on-line focus groups, the characteristics of the groups including only one profession and collecting data from their peers may have introduced bias.

## **Conclusions**

The Keele IPE programme culminates in reflecting on working in clinical practice, which some physiotherapy students comment positively on. Satisfaction is limited by the classroom based learning within the IPE programme and reflection as the method of assessment is not suiting all learning styles. Keele physiotherapy students supported by the wider evidence prefer to 'learn by doing' and see MDT working as a skill, therefore adapting the portfolio to include a number inter-professional working competencies with some reflection is under consideration.

## **References**

Boud, D. and Walker, D. (1998). Promoting reflection in professional courses: The challenge of context. *Studies in Higher Education*, 23(2), pp.191-206.

CAIPE (Centre For The Advancement Of Interprofessional Education). (2015).

Defining IPE. [Online]

Available at: <http://caipe.org.uk/about-us/defining-ipe/>. [Accessed: 30/08/16]

Cusack, T. and O'Donoghue, G. (2012). The introduction of an interprofessional education module: students' perceptions. *Quality Primary Care*, 20(3), pp.231-8.

Mickan, S. (2005). Evaluating the effectiveness of health care teams. *Aust. Health Review*, [online] 29(2), p.211.

Available at: [http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view\\_file&file\\_id=AH050211.pdf](http://www.publish.csiro.au/?act=view_file&file_id=AH050211.pdf) [accessed 30/8/16]

Ponzer, S., Hylin, U., Kusoffsky, A., Lauffs, M., Lonka, K., Mattiasson, A. and Nordstrom, G. (2004). Interprofessional training in the context of clinical practice: goals and students' perceptions on clinical education wards. *Med Education*, [Online] 38 (7): 727-736.

Available at:

<http://web.a.ebscohost.com/ehost/pdfviewer/pdfviewer?vid=2&sid=c1d6ae5a-c982-48cf-90f6-ea02c4a92cf3%40sessionmgr4007&hid=4214> [Accessed: 30/08/16]

## Funding

None

## Conflicts of interest

None

Table 1. Group characteristics

	<b>KLE group</b>	<b>Facebook Group</b>
Gender	Male 4, Female 4	Male 4, Female 4
Home EU / international	Home 2 / International 6	Home 8 / International 0

## Author profiles

Research supervisor and main author:

Valerie Ball MSc

Lecturer in Physiotherapy, School of Health and Rehabilitation, Keele University.

Inter-Professional Education Year 3 Lead for Faculty of Medicine and Health Sciences, School of Health and Rehabilitation IPE co-ordinator.

01782 733536

[v.ball@keele.ac.uk](mailto:v.ball@keele.ac.uk)

Researcher

Aniksha Dhamelia BSc

Physiotherapist, Royal Free London NHS Foundation Trust

Keele graduate 2016, now working as a physiotherapist

[anik\\_dhamelia@hotmail.com](mailto:anik_dhamelia@hotmail.com)

Researcher

Elliot Rollason BSc

Physiotherapist, Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust

Keele graduate 2016, now working as a physiotherapist

[elliottrollason@gmail.com](mailto:elliottrollason@gmail.com)