**Sheffield Hallam University logo**

***College of Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences***

***Department of Social Work Social Care and Community Studies***

**Foundation Degree**

**Working with Children, Young People and Families**

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**Work Based Learning One**

**Portfolio Guidance**

# Writing Your Portfolio

NB: All names and identifying details of agency, staff and service users must be changed or erased in order to ensure that confidentiality is maintained (please refer to SHU Consent and Confidentiality Guidance which can be found on the WBL Blackboard site)

**Your Work Based Learning One Portfolio**

**Section One**

Describe the placement setting and the area in which it is situated. Describe the composition of the local community and include references to statistical data and evidence in order to support your work e.g. National Census Data, The Index of Multiple deprivation etc.

Describe the work undertaken at the placement and its aims and objectives. Discuss how the service/agency meets the needs of children, young people and families with reference to the legal and/or policy focus of the work e.g. parenting, family support, education etc.

(Suggested word count approx. 500 words)

**Example**

The agency within which I am placed is a family support service which provides both universal and targeted services to children, young people and their families (Featherstone 2006). Family support and early intervention are a key element of recent government reports (Munro 2011; Field 2010; Allen 2011) and the services provided by the agency reflect the current national agenda. The service aims to engage children and families in a supportive and flexible way and works to maximise strengths, expand support networks and encourage engagement with a range of agencies such as health, social care and community-based services (Department of Health 2002).

The staff team consists of:

* One Full Time Service Manager
* One Full Time Family Support Co-ordinator
* Five Full Time Family Support Workers
* One Full Time Parenting Coordinator
* One Full Time Office Manager

The town within which the service is based is ranked 28th on the Index of Multiple Deprivation (2007) out of all English districts which places it within 10% of districts ranked as the most deprived. The service is based at the heart of a large local authority housing estate with the majority of service users residing within the local community. The area falls within the highest 30% of deprived areas in England (Department for Communities and Local Government 2007). 30% of the local population consists of young people aged between 0-19 years and approximately one third of all households have two or more dependent children. The area has high levels of child povertywith 62% of children living in households which fall below the poverty line (Department for Communities and Local Government 2007)

A large number of children live in lone parent households and the number of lone parents claiming benefits is significantly high (Department for Communities and Local Government 2007) A high proportion of the working age population claim sickness or disability benefits and according to the Index 73% of the local population are affected by income deprivation (Department for Communities and Local Government 2007)

41% of 16-74 year olds have no qualifications at all (Department for Communities and Local Government 2007) Studies (Joseph Rowntree Foundation 2010; Cuthbert and Hatch 2009) have demonstrated the relationship between deprivation and education and have established links between the impact of deprivation and outcomes in adulthood.

In summary the area is characterised by high levels of deprivation and children and young people living in the area are exposed to multiple deprivations which research has shown may adversely affect both their short term and longer term health, educational attainment and life chances (Allen 2011; Field 2010).

The Children Act 1989 requires Local Authorities to provide services in order to:

"*Safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need; and as far as is consistent with that duty, to promote the upbringing of such children by their families* ". (Children Act 1989: Section 17)

To this end the service works in partnership with a range of other agencies and professionals in order to enhance the quality of family life, prevent family breakdown and maximise the potential for independence and social inclusion (Gardner 2003)

Activities range from informal activities which aim to provide social contact for parents and carers and play opportunities for children to highly structured programmes such as parenting programmes. All services are provided free at the point of use and can be accessed through a variety of routes, for example, children and families may be referred to the service or may access programmes informally through its universal provision and/or through self-referral routes.

Services include:

**Family Drop-In**: aimed at parents and carers of children aged 8 yrs and under. The Drop-In provides play opportunities for children and social contact for adults. Healthy snacks are provided free of charge.

**Baby Group**: provides a safe and stimulating environment for babies and toddlers aged from birth to eighteen months. Family support staff are available to offer support and advice to parents and carers. Healthy snacks are provided at the end of the session

**Parenting Programmes**: aimed at parents/carers of children aged 0-12 years. Parenting programmes offer practical help and advice on ways of understanding and managing children's behaviour. Parents and carers gain support from other members of the group and from the trained group leaders. A number of parenting programmes are offered including:

* The Strengthening Families Programmes for children 10-14 years
* Webster Stratton (incredible years) 12 week basic parenting programme
* The Webster Stratton 12 week school aged programme
* The 8 week Baby Webster Stratton programme for parents and cares of babies aged 0-6 months
* The 12 week Toddler Webster Stratton group for parents and carers of children aged 1-3 years*.*

Word count 781

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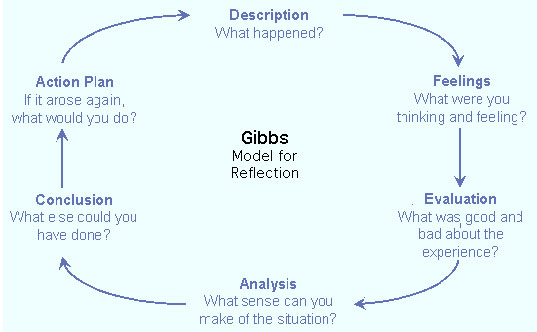
**Section Two**

**Reflective Learning Journal**

During the time you are at your placement you are expected to keep a reflective learning journal or dairy. The purpose of the journal is to enable you to provide evidence of your learning and your ability to link theory to practice. You should use the Reflective Cycle to enable you to reflect upon and analyse your experiences. You should use your learning journal to record your thoughts, ideas, insights, feelings and observations on a regular basis throughout your placement.

Whilst the reflective journal is not about quantity of work but more about the quality of the entries you include you should note that if there is insufficient quantity within the learning journal it is unlikely that you will have demonstated sufficient evidence to meet the requirements of the curriculum. It is therefore suggested that your journal contains at least 2 - 3 entries per week and that the overall word count is not less than 4000 words

**The Reflective Cycle**



A suggested template for your reflective learning journal

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| **Description**  Describe what happened. |  |
| **Feelings**  What were you thinking and feeling at the time? |  |
| **Evaluation**  What was positive and what was negative about the experience. |  |
| **Analysis**  What sense can you make out of the situation. What does it mean? |  |
| **Conclusion**  What else could you have done? What would you do differently? |  |
| **Action Plan**  How will you adapt your practice in the light of this new understanding? |  |

**Section Three**

Choose 2 significant experiences or events from your placement and write an in-depth reflective account of these experiences using the Reflective Cycle

These accounts should include reference to theory, evidence and research and should include a reference list (suggested word count 1500 words for each reflective account)

**Example**

During my placement I had the opportunity to participate inaFamily Drop-In session which was aimed at parents and carers of children aged 5 years and under. The Drop-In provides play opportunities for children and social contact for parents/carers and has the wider aim of reducing isolation and enabling families to extend their social networks within a safe and informal environment (Cigno 1988: Jack 1997)

My work based supervisor gave me specific responsibility for "meeting and greeting' the families as they entered the building. Initially I felt very anxious about undertaking this role as I was aware that my communication style would be crucial in ensuring that the families felt welcomed and valued. As Koprowska (2010) reminds us "*Human beings make very rapid appraisals of information from other humans and quickly form judgements"*

The first time I undertook this role I felt very awkward and inhibited and I struggled to overcome my anxiety about taking on what I perceived to be an extremely important responsibility. I was aware of the need to pay attention to both my verbal and non-verbal communication as Mehrabian (2009) suggests "*7% of the message pertaining to feelings and attitudes is in the words that are spoken whilst 38% is paralinguistic and 55% is in the facial expression*". I was also aware that in order to communicate effectively it would be necessary to acknowledge my feelings of anxiety and to recognise that my lack of confidence could potentially be perceived as unwelcoming by the families attending the Drop In. Dewane (2006) suggests that it is important to acknowledge the experience of anxiety and also to reflect upon the thoughts and feelings which may contribute to it. He advises that, as practitioners, we must consider how our anxiety may manifest itself in our emotions, thoughts, and behaviours.

As a student I am aware of the importance of applying theory to practice and I strongly subscribe to the view that effective interventions with children and families must be based on a sound theoretical foundation (Teater 2010). After some consideration I decided to adopt a solution focused approach (Milner and Bateman 2011). This decision was based upon my knowledge of the Solution Focused Model having attended a lecture and seminar at University and also having undertaken some independent research on the subject. My decision was also based upon the fact that the solution focused model is well researched and has been shown to be effective within the context of work with children and families (Zimmerman et al 1996; Munro 2011)

I found that by adopting the technique of "Problem Free Talk" I was able to engage the families in a positive and empowering dialogue which allowed me to begin to build rapport and trust. As a discourse function "Problem Free Talk" seeks to establish an atmosphere within which strengths and positive qualities are emphasised and where experiences, preferences, and opinions can be shared (Milner and Bateman 2011). I found that using this technique enabled me to effectively manage the channel of communication between myself and the families and allowed me to demonstrate my appreciation of the value of the contributions they made (Zimmerman et al 1996).

Despite my initial anxiety about taking on the responsibility of the "meet and greet" on refection I found the experience to be very positive and rewarding. It has enabled me to build upon and develop my knowledge and skills in relation to effective communication and engagement and has allowed me to gain experience and confidence regarding this area of my practice. My overall learning experience was greatly enhanced by undertaking some preparation prior to the Drop In taking place. By researching and adopting a sound theoretical approach I was able to link theory to practice and this enabled me to develop an approach that was both professional and effective (Parker and Bradley 2007). I have learnt a great deal from this experience and I have recognised that in order to continue to improve my practice I must ensure that I prepare for future situations by researching and preparing for future interventions with service users.

Word count 683

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Barbra Teater (Author)

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**Section Four**

**Action Plan**

Develop an action plan for your personal, professional and academic developmental needs identifying at least 3/4 actions which will provide you with learning objectives for your next placement. Identify specific actions you could take that will help you to achieve these targets. Remember your targets should be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable, **R**ealistic and **T**ime limited.

**Action plan pro-forma**

| Target: | Priority | By when | What specific actions are needed? | Progress notes  **How are you getting on?  Are any changes needed?** | Decision  **Done / Continue?** |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Example:***  Improve ability to work with colleagues as a member of a team | High | May 2014 | * Critical reflection on my learning style and how this impacts on my ability to contribute to team working * Seek feedback from colleagues on my team working * Develop more confidence in speaking up in groups in class/ seminars | I have read more around being a reflector, and how this can make me reluctant to speak out in groups – trying to counter this, seems to be working, according to feedback from colleagues  Trying to speak up more and take a lead in group situations – feel I am making more of a contribution to discussions | To Continue |
|  |  |  |  |  |  |
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**Section Five**

The placement supervisor will undertake 2 direct observation of the students practice whilst on placement. The observations will be formally recorded using the pro-forma below and they must be included in the portfolio

**Supervisor Observation**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Name of student |  |
| Name of Supervisor |  |
| Situation observed |  |
| Comment on the students ability to plan, organize and undertake the activity |  |
| What are the particular strengths of the student |  |
| What area/skills/knowledge could the student improve/develop |  |
| Supervisors signature |  |
| Date |  |

**Section Six**

You must submit a placement log sheet which evidences 200 hours of practice and which is signed by the placement supervisor.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| **Student name** |  |  |
| **Name of placement** |  |  |
| **Date** | **Hours undertaken** | **Supervisor’s signature** |
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**Section Seven**

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| --- |
| **Work Based Learning Supervisor Summative Report** |
| Student name |
| Name of placement |
| What is your assessment of the students overall performance over the course of the placement |
|  |
| What are the particular strengths of the student |
|  |
| What skills and knowledge could the student develop further? |
|  |
| Any other comments |
|  |
| **Pass Fail (please circle as appropriate)** |
| **Signed**  **Date:** |

**Section Eight**

**Portfolio Checklist**

Please use the checklist to check that you have included all required work in the portfolio before submission.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Section | Content area | Checklist |
| Section One | Description of agency, area and work undertaken |  |
| Section Two | Reflective Learning Journal |  |
| Section Three | Two In-Depth Reflective Accounts |  |
| Section Four | Action Plan |  |
| Section Five | Two Supervisor Observations |  |
| Section Six | Signed Weekly Placement log sheet |  |
| Section Seven | Work Based Supervisor Report |  |

**In addition your portfolio may also include:**

* Examples of work you have undertaken at placement e.g. planning, activities etc.
* Evidence of any training or professional development courses you have taken e.g. certificates etc.
* Policy document or information about the placement, its services etc
* Feedback from colleagues and service users
* Any other evident you feel is relevant to demonstrate your professional learning and development