

July 2009

Issue 15

ALPS BULLETIN

Welcome to our
new look Bulletin!

Assessment & Learning in Practice Settings

ALPS & the Professional, Statutory & Regulatory Bodies seminar

Towards a competent and confident professional workforce: an interprofessional partnership between ALPS, employer representatives and Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies



How can ALPS practices be used beyond professional registration and can we extend ALPS to health and social care disciplines beyond the existing 16 professions?

These were two of the questions discussed at ALPS' 3rd seminar involving the UK Professional, Statutory and Regulatory Bodies (PSRBs). Delegates from the 16 PSRBs involved in ALPS discussed questions such as how can ALPS' assessments be used beyond registration, agreeing that the PSRBs' existing work on giving guidance on how professionals use their portfolios for Continuing Professional Development provided the ideal opportunity to link with ALPS' work on pre-registration competency assessment.



ALPS were keen to use this 3rd seminar to further embed their work within PSRB practices and, in so doing, assure the sustainability of their work beyond 2010 when the programme ends.

Colleagues from health and social care practice, and from Skills for Care attended, as well as ALPS staff from the 16 professions. The morning was spent demonstrating ALPS Common Competency Maps, how

the assessment tools are created and used interprofessionally, and how they are delivered to mobile devices using the ALPS electronic systems. Delegates were moved swiftly round mini-workshops which allowed them to find out more about how ALPS has worked across five universities, 16 professions and multiple practice settings, satisfying all ethical requirements to involve staff, students and service users. Delegates were given the opportunity to experience how the Maps are used as the basis for the assessment tools. They were also shown how to access digital learning resources via a mobile device, and learned more about how the various professions were able to work together to develop enhanced assessment practices.

As well as recognising the benefits to students, delegates also saw the potential for using ALPS work on competency assessments with underperforming and lone practitioners.

ALPS' commercial partners were on hand to explain how the competency framework was developed to work in tandem with existing competency systems and how service user confidentiality was assured at all times.

Delegate Samantha Jewell, Professional Officer (Education & Students) at the Society and College of Radiographers (SCoR) said,

“SCoR's existing work on giving guidance on how professionals use their portfolios for Continuing Professional Development provides the ideal opportunity to link with ALPS' work on pre-registration competency assessment. It will be interesting to see how we can work together in the future”

Trudie Roberts, ALPS Director, said, “We were delighted to host such a profitable meeting. We have worked in consultation with the PSRBs and employer organisations since the beginning of ALPS. Today, we were able to demonstrate first hand what ALPS has achieved to date. Feedback from the PSRBs and employers has been excellent and we plan to use their very positive comments in strengthening the work of ALPS”.

A report of the day will be available on the ALPS website soon.

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

Trish Walker

ALPS Programme Manager
t.e.walker@leeds.ac.uk

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), and Leeds Metropolitan and York St John Universities. There are 16 professions across the partnership from Audiology to Social Work and a wide range of partners including NHS Yorkshire and the Humber and practice networks. We are also working in consultation with the Professional Statutory and Regulatory Bodies.

ALPS awarded £100,000 from SHA

The NHS Yorkshire & the Humber Strategic Health Authority has agreed to fund three ALPS projects which will allow further development of the ALPS Assessment Suite

The SHA has allocated almost £100,000 to the projects which will help to embed the ALPS tools and other outputs as the programme enters its final year of operation. Students have always been at the centre of ALPS, and it is expected that the planned developments funded by the SHA will enhance the students' experience of using the mobile devices and the assessment tools. The three projects revolve around:

- E-portfolio interoperability
- Accessibility
- Reporting

The first of the funded projects will enable students to move data between their own e-portfolio and other systems, giving them scope to import and export assessment responses, as well as other files and learning resources. This focus on e-portfolio interoperability will allow students to transfer evidence of their knowledge and competences to commonly used e-portfolio systems that are mapped to a shared standard. Plus, as more e-portfolio systems conform to the new standard, the benefits for students will increase; instead of losing their e-portfolio when they leave university, the potential is there for them to transfer all the data to the system employed at their new workplace.



The accessibility improvements will develop the Mobile Client's interface, allowing users to customise the display, including changing font size and style and resizing the screen

The aim of the second project is to improve accessibility of the ALPS Mobile Client. This relates to how learning materials and assessments are presented to users on the mobile devices. The ALPS Mobile Enabled Disabled Students (MEDS) project has been investigating the specific needs of disabled students when using mobile technologies for learning and assessment in practice settings, and the proposed changes will address key issues identified by their research (for more info visit <http://www.alpscetl.ac.uk/ResearchNetwork.htm>). There is a general consensus across the ALPS collaboration that these enhancements, including the capacity to customise and adjust the interface, will improve usability for everyone called upon to use the devices, not just disabled students.

The final project will look at providing more information about how the Assessment Suite is being used by ALPS students. In order to monitor students' progress more closely, academic staff at partner universities (Bradford, Huddersfield, Leeds, Leeds Metropolitan and York St John) will be provided with more detailed reporting which will enable tutors to easily keep track of students' completed assessments and achieved competences. Much of this work will be undertaken by ALPS' commercial partners, MKM and ecommnet, who will work in conjunction to pull these reports together.

ALPS Mobile Technologies Project Manager, Tamsin Treasure-Jones, believes the projects will help to improve learning and assessment for students out on placement. "ALPS is delighted to have received funding from the SHA for these exciting projects. The Assessment Suite is already giving students the opportunity to gather evidence of their knowledge and competences, and further development of features such as the e-portfolio interoperability will allow them greater control over their own learning and development."

Kate Murphy

ALPS Communications Officer
k.murphy@leeds.ac.uk

ALPS pilot commended by NMC

The School of Healthcare at the University of Leeds has received praise for its involvement with ALPS

As part of the quality assurance process, the HLSP (previously the Health and Life Sciences Partnership) has been appointed by the Nursing and Midwifery Council to ensure that nursing and midwifery education meets a consistently high standard. Huge emphasis is placed on the student experience in both university and practice settings.

The programmes reviewed at the University of Leeds were pre-registration Nursing Learning Disabilities and Independent and Supplementary Prescribing. Five areas are considered as part of a risk-based model; resources, admissions and progression, practice learning, fitness for practice and quality assurance.

ALPS was discussed in relation to partnership working across five universities and a variety of local Trusts, and the piloting of the use of

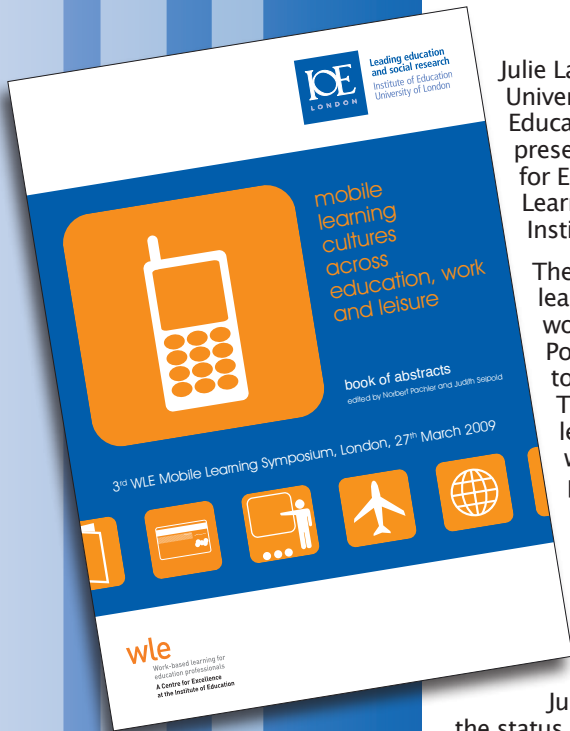
mobile devices to support practice learning across five of the eight professional groups at Leeds was commended. The delivery of teaching materials to mobile devices to enable work-based learning also garnered a positive response. The assessment tool for "Demonstrating respect for a service user or carer" was demonstrated and linked to the Communication, Team Working and Ethical Practice Common Competency Maps.

The review team felt that ALPS was a good example of strong partnerships across local Trusts and other universities. In addition, the School was commended for its involvement of service users and carers, particularly the fact that the involvement is embedded within the work of the School at a variety of different levels, with a number of innovative projects.

Margaret Lascelles

ALPS Partner Lead
University of Leeds
m.a.lascelles@leeds.ac.uk

WLE 3rd Mobile Learning Symposium Conference report



Julie Laxton, ALPS Teaching Fellow at the University of Leeds and Ceri Coulby, ALPS Educational Staff Development Officer presented at the Work-based Learning for Education Professionals 3rd Mobile Learning Symposium hosted by the Institute of Education in London.

The conference showcased mobile learning projects from all over the world with presentations from Portuguese primary school teachers to university lecturers in Cape Town. The symposium consisted of three learning “tracks” and attendees were encouraged to attend the presentations they were interested in. The three tracks were:

- Learning across contexts
- Cultural approaches to mobile learning
- Status quo, visions and conjectures

Julie and Ceri presented under the status quo, visions and conjectures track. Their presentation consisted of initial themed findings from the University of Leeds regarding the student experience of using mobile devices on placement for assessment and learning.

The feedback presented was gathered at a series of training sessions attended by a total of 137 students involved in the ALPS programme; and identified the key benefits and challenges students perceive when

using mobile devices. Optimal conditions to maintaining student motivation were discussed.

The presentation was very well received, and it is clear that whilst the ALPS programme is in its fourth year, the programme concept is still new and innovative, as assessment using mobile devices is still very rare.

One of the presentations of particular interest to ALPS came from a Swiss medical initiative which sees the use of i-phones for clinical communication; particularly between first year doctors and consultants. It is expected to combat the communication time delays caused by very large, geographically dispersed hospital settings by allowing students to send questions and case details (including photographs) to consultants via text and receive text instruction and advice in return. The i-phones will also be used to share details of case discussions that would usually only be witnessed by those junior doctors on duty.

For further details of the projects presented at the conference please see the book of abstracts for the conference available at

http://www.londonmobilelearning.net/symposium/downloads/3rd_wle_mlearning_symposium_-_book_of_abstracts_spreads.pdf

Ceri Coulby

ALPS Educational Staff Development Officer
c.coulby@leeds.ac.uk

Towards A Sustainable Communication Strategy

The ALPS Partner Site Implementation Group at York St John University has been considering the best strategy for communicating essential information on the mobile assessment tools rollout to placement providers

Inspired by the University’s focus on enquiry-based learning, which encourages consideration of students as co-producers of knowledge rather than mere consumers, the team decided to look at the potential of developing a student-centred communication strategy.

Careful consideration of the audience is a prerequisite to the success of any communication strategy. Although the collective title ‘placement provider’ suggests a homogenous group, the people providing placement opportunities to health and social care students are actually a constantly changing population representing multiple professions working in a range of public, private and third sector organisations in both institutional and community settings. Each placement provider has a unique approach to students depending on their own professional background, role, experience and relationship with the HEI; a different understanding of pedagogy, and an individual perspective on the use of technology in education.

By using students as the primary mode of communication with placement providers, the need for a tailored approach can be addressed. It is the responsive, interactive and contextualised nature of the student’s contact

with the placement provider that distinguishes this approach from other alternatives. Information can be accurately delivered to the right person at the optimal time, minimising wastage of resources and avoiding bombarding colleagues with documentation that may not appear relevant.

Initial contact made by students prior to arrival on the placement provides an opportunity to give general background information on ALPS, as well as more specific information on the participation expected from the placement educator. More detailed explanations of how to use the Common Competency Maps, assessment tools and technology can be given by the student after arrival and contextualised when the opportunity arises.

Using students as the primary method of communicating about new developments has a number of potential benefits for the students themselves. Relying on students to facilitate communication between university tutors and placement providers increases the likelihood that the students are seen as active participants in the management of their learning rather than the recipients of a previously arranged teaching experience. The team at York St John University anticipate that challenging the traditional student/educator relationship in this way will create a learning environment which helps to engender a greater sense of engagement, ownership and motivation in the students.

Explaining, instructing, and supporting their placement educators to use the

placement gives students the chance to start to apply their skills in a new setting before moving onto more challenging clinical situations. It is hoped evaluation will show that as well as being a very effective method of communicating essential information to placement providers, giving students this responsibility will provide a purposeful, meaningful learning opportunity that makes a

significant contribution to achieving the ALPS aims of increasing competence and confidence in communication and team working.

Peter Gray

ALPS Partner Lead
York St John University
p.gray@yorksja.ac.uk

ALPS Group Study Area featured in EDUCAUSE Quarterly!



A photo feature on the ALPS Group Study Area in the Health Sciences Library at the University of Leeds has been included in the latest edition of EDUCAUSE Quarterly (EQ)

ALPS Research Officer Viktoria Joynes responded to a call for images of versatile learning spaces, and provided a photo and description of the ALPS Group Study Area, which has been featured alongside learning spaces from institutions all over the world.

The ALPS Group Study Area was designed to help develop team working and communication skills of the students who use it. The balance between facilitating group work and ensuring lone students are not disturbed was achieved through the provision of adaptable facilities, such as movable furniture, works of art that double as sound proofing, and a 'poster pod' which supports group work by providing printing, copying and other relevant services.

The benefits of the study area are featured in EQ, an online, peer-reviewed practitioner's journal which publishes materials that relate to planning, developing, managing, and evaluating information resources in higher education, such as technology and support services.

The current issue covers a wide range of approaches to learning spaces and highlights practical advice on implementing informal study areas, as well as articles about unusual learning spaces (including the conversion of a swimming pool to a sandbox classroom at Clemson University in South Carolina!)

To view the ALPS feature and to read more about the research being carried out on learning space design, visit the EDUCAUSE website:

<http://www.educause.edu/eq>

ALPS announces new Globalised Skills and Attributes Maps

The Common Competency Maps have received a great deal of positive feedback from health and social care professions across the five partners, and over the past twelve months ALPS has received considerable interest in the Maps from other subject areas.

In order to make them transferable to other disciplines, the Common Competency Maps have been reviewed, revised and reworked! The result is three new Globalised Skills and Attributes Maps which can be adapted for use by any discipline in any institution to assess students on any work-based placement.

The Maps cover Communication, Team Working and Ethical Awareness skills and attributes. They have been produced by an ALPS Working Group, however input was also sought from academic staff from a range of subjects including Business and Built Environment.

The new Maps will be published shortly, and will soon be available for use. Find out more in the next edition of the Bulletin or on the ALPS website: www.alps-cetl.ac.uk



Introducing...

In this issue of the Bulletin we interview Catherine Coates, Director for the Faculty of Health Placement Unit at Leeds Metropolitan University...

...What's your role in ALPS?

“ I am an ALPS CETL Teaching Fellow at Leeds Met and together with my colleague Jill Taylor we co-ordinate and lead the various ALPS work streams within Leeds Met and collaborate with our partners at other HEIs. I am a member of the Joint Management Group, the Monitoring and Evaluation Group, the Common Competency Mapping Working Group and the Tools Working Group, and concentrate on the practical implications of ALPS processes for our practice assessors and University tutors. ”

How did you become involved in ALPS?

“ I have focused on practice learning for the last 10 years of my academic life and have been the practice lead for Dietetics for many years, leading the collaboration between HEI colleagues and our practice partners, implementing new assessment processes to enhance placement learning. When the bid for the ALPS CETL was being co-ordinated it seemed a natural progression for me to apply for the Teaching Fellowship giving me the opportunity to work across professional groups to benefit assessment learning and teaching across the wider practice environment. ”

Tell us more about your role and what you are trying to achieve within ALPS

“ One of the key aims of ALPS is to foster authentic interprofessional assessment opportunities and to encourage this we all need to be convinced that when it comes to Core Competences, such as communication, we are all looking for the same range of skills in our students. This early investigative work across professions provided the evidence to support the development of the Common Competency Maps for Communication, Team Working and Ethical Practice from which our ALPS assessment tools have been derived. Getting agreement on common assessment tools across 16 health and social care professions is a phenomenal achievement which wouldn't have been possible without the rigour of this early research. ”

The next key challenge is to get universal acceptance of the mobile assessment approach which enables the student's assessments to be published to an e-portfolio enabling interaction with tutors and self reflection on progress. ”

What is the biggest challenge ALPS faces?

“ Getting the rollout of the mobile technology right has been a big challenge; ensuring that the students and practice ”

assessors are confident in using the mobile devices and the ALPS assessment suite. Leading the implementation of this process has been challenging and we have learned through experience about how to make this process a success. Overcoming the technical difficulties is the key to getting effective evaluation of the actual assessment tools, but just like any technological advance, this process is initially challenging for both students and staff! We can now see positive advances in this process and have very good evidence to inform the development of mobile information strategies within our own HEIs. ”

Do you have examples of how your work with ALPS has benefited learning and teaching?

“ I am very keen to see more service user feedback in student assessment particularly around the communication skills assessment tools. We have been encouraging Dietetic students to involve service users in their evidence of competency in communication learning outcomes for some time and I think that the mobile assessment tools will encourage this process across all professions. I think the work with the Communication Common Competency Map has highlighted these possibilities and opened up the debate in this area. ”

Where do you see the work of ALPS having the biggest impact?

“ I think that the influence on mobile assessment processes will have a big impact on health and social care assessment in the future. The potential for linking mobile assessment tools to the student's e-portfolio is very exciting and although fraught with difficulties in the pilot stage, most students, practice educators and university tutors can see the potential advantages of these developments for future practice learning. ”

Finally, tell us an interesting fact about yourself you think people would like to know

“ Prior to becoming an ALPS CETL Teaching Fellow I was a bit of a techno-phobe and very cautious about mobile technology but now I am completely converted! So if I can do it anybody can! ”

Announcements

Congratulations to Amy Cowling, one of our ALPS students at the University of Bradford. Amy, a second year midwifery student has come third in a national essay writing competition for health students

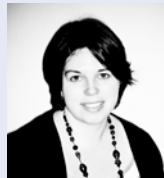
The competition, run by the Higher Education Academy, invited students from universities across the UK to apply. Amy's essay discussed the question: 'What is your experience of using technology as part of your learning process?', and detailed the range of technologies that she has used in clinical practice and during her course at the University.

For more information see:

<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/mediacentre/press-releases/Title,2720,en.php>

ALPS will be hosting an international conference next spring. The dates are confirmed for Tuesday 16th and Wednesday 17th March 2010. Don't forget to keep checking the ALPS website for updates!

ALPS welcomes two new additions to the Core Team



Kate Murphy took up the post of Communications Officer in April and will be responsible for coordinating the dissemination of programme outputs as ALPS enters its final year.



Gill Waters joined ALPS in June as Conference Organiser. Gill will be working one day a week, managing preparations for the ALPS Conference.

We also have to say farewell (for now!) to ALPS Research Officer Viktoria Joynes, who will be going on maternity leave at the beginning of September. We wish her our best and look forward to welcoming her back next year!

Forthcoming Events

E-Learning in Health Conference: Working Together to Enhance Learning

16 - 17 July 2009, Scarman Training & Conference Centre, University of Warwick

For more details visit:

<http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/news-events/eventsbox/2009/elearningcon/>

iPED 2009, 4th International Inquiring Pedagogies Conference: 'Researching Beyond Boundaries', Academic Communities without Borders

14-15 September 2009, Coventry TechnoCentre, Coventry University Technology Park. For more details visit:

<http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/news-events/eventsbox/2009/iped09>

European InterProfessional Education Network (EIPEN) 2nd International Conference

17-18 September 2009, Oulu, Finland

For more details visit:

http://www.eipen.org/index.php?option=com_content&task=view&id=99&Itemid=168

Authenticity to Action - Involving Service Users and Carers in Higher Education

4 - 6 November 2009, Grange Hotel, Grange-Over-Sands, Cumbria

For more details visit:

<http://www.health.heacademy.ac.uk/news-events/eventsbox/2009/authtoaction>

Future Bulletins

The Bulletin is distributed electronically and via the ALPS website three times a year to keep colleagues up to date and involved with the work of the ALPS Centre for Excellence in Teaching and Learning. For further information on the articles featured visit our website at

www.alps-cetl.ac.uk

We are looking for keen readers and contributors to the Bulletin, in order to make it a valuable, relevant and 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.

The deadline for contributions to the next ALPS Bulletin is 23rd September 2009.

We'd be delighted if you would forward this Bulletin to your colleagues especially those in practice. 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

ALPS Contact Details

ALPS Core Team is based at the University of Leeds:

T. 0113 343 6352

alps@leeds.ac.uk

www.alps-cetl.ac.uk

Each of the ALPS partners has a lead contact:

University of Bradford

Chris Dearnley

c.a.dearnley1@bradford.ac.uk

University of Huddersfield

Ian Warwick

i.warwick@hud.ac.uk

University of Leeds

Margaret Lascelles

m.a.lascelles@leeds.ac.uk

Leeds Metropolitan University

leuan Ellis

i.ellis@leedsmet.ac.uk

York St John University

Peter Gray

p.gray@yorks.ac.uk

NHS Yorkshire & the Humber Strategic Health Authority

Kath Hinchliff

kath.hinchliff@yorksandhumber.nhs.uk