

The RCGP Diary Project 2008 – an important feedback to the Curriculum

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This is a short summary of the Diary Project 2008, to feedback to the contributors to the Project. An article describing the results in detail is underway. These results have also been presented at the UKCEA conference in Cambridge, June 2008.

Background

The project was started with the wish for user feedback on the Curriculum and with a dream of building a contemporary history of GP training in the UK. It is inspired by diary projects run in the UK e.g. by 'The Mass Observation Archive; University of Sussex, and in other European countries.

Data collection

Experiences from a pilot study in one deanery were incorporated into the invitation and the technical data collection.

The invitation was sent out

- To trainees via AiT network mail
- To trainers via Deanery networks
- To all trainers and trainees via the e-portfolio log in web page

The submission form was to be found on the internet. It was linked to information about the project.

Short summary of findings and interpretations

We received 143 (150 in total) diaries (74 from trainees/69 from trainers). Seven entries were blank, probably pages submitted by error. For the Diary Project 2009 we are working on changing the form to give a possibility to edit the page before submission to avoid submitting problems.

The diaries described how the Curriculum has been implemented and how the different educational tools are working; the challenges, the benefits and what it meant to be training within the Curriculum on a specific day in March 2008.

It has been no secret that the Curriculum has been perceived as a very big document by trainers and trainees, and that there can be a tension between the priority given to training and assessment. However, the diaries gave us everyday life examples of these perceptions, making it much easier to understand how changes can support the training in the future.

Apart from this, the diaries described the different contents of training days as seen by trainers and trainees; Busy days, impacting the private lives of both trainees and trainers,

but with a huge engagement to grow with the challenges of their working and training days. The diaries gave many examples of the cooperation between the trainees and the different kinds of GP educators and clinical supervisors; the perceptions of where the responsibility for learning and teaching lie and the flexibility that is needed to succeed in training in the different learning environments. They described the ways trainers work together in professional fora, what they wish for the trainees to gain from the training, the different teaching methods applied in the training of their trainees, but also how they worry about their own further education as trainers. The diaries also gave examples of the support as well as the practical and technical problems experienced with the learning tools; primarily the ePortfolio, 'The condensed curriculum guide' and the websites.

Impact on the development of the Curriculum

In all educational reforms there is an implementation period; a time to get acquainted with the new structure of the training and the new educational tools. However, getting feedback from all trainers and trainees who contributed with a day's diary in March 2008 has meant that the College groups working with the development of the Curriculum and its assessments have had an instant opportunity to understand where changes are necessary.

From an educational perspective it is also very important to document how the implementation of an educational reform takes place in the training community. We are therefore very grateful for all the contributions you sent in 2008, helping us to document and understand the process of the implementation of the Curriculum.

By implementing the knowledge gained from the diaries and the other feedback the College has received, we have now been able to submit the second version of the Curriculum for PMETB's approval, and we have set up a strategy for the Curriculum development work in 2009 to support the training within the Curriculum for all.