

Title: Psychology Literate Citizenship

Transition(s) the practice supports: This is for Psychology students in their final year of an Honours programme.

Abstract:

Psychological literacy is the ability to recognize appropriate applications of psychological theory in the wider world. Psychologically Literate Citizenship is the safe, confident and independent ability and willingness to act on that for the benefit of community, workplace etc. The key to achieving this is the attention given to developing **confidence** and **independence** in our students and this has required us to innovate right across the final year programme. Confidence is built by repeated practice within an environment where initial failure is rewarded and reflective learning encouraged. Independence is brought about by a carefully managed introduction of explicit student-leadership and simultaneous withdrawal of academic staff input and support over the year, culminating in a final real-world research project that is entirely unsupervised.

Description:

The final year programme in Psychology is centred on the concept of Psychologically Literate Citizenship – a framework for teaching Psychology that emphasises critical thinking, personal integrity, and the understanding of psychology within complex real world settings.

From our induction day through to graduation, the programme is structured to facilitate student independence, and enhance employability through increased confidence in knowledge and skills. Students engage as partners in learning, for example, by contributing to the design and delivery of peer-led teaching. Similarly, previous student feedback centred on staff performance and resources, but we now use formative evaluations that ask students to reflect on their engagement with various learning opportunities.

Student engagement with this process is probably best demonstrated by the last challenge we set. In the second half of their final semester, and under strict time constraints, students are required to work together on a group project. Each group is given a brief statement of a real world problem to tackle and relevant stakeholders are identified as the audience for the final report. Example projects include identifying how psychological theory and methods can inform conservation, education, or health strategies. Students work collaboratively to develop an intervention, or design a study and collect pilot data, or conduct a review. The outcomes are impressive, not least because the entire process is completed without any staff supervision. If problems do emerge within a group, coaching is provided to support the students in resolving these issues between themselves. This experience enhances our students' confidence in their ability to act as independent qualified psychologists. This is an important outcome, and it comes at a time when they are about to embark on the next transition.

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Other information:

PLC at Stirling: Higher Education Academy report by Roger Watt

<https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/sites/default/files/resources/Watt-developing-psyc-lit-Stirling-v2.pdf>