

**Academic skills development for undergraduate nursing students: Can the use of a tool designed to aid the co-production of academic action plans improve student engagement and enhance academic performance / confidence?**

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# Academic skills development:

The development and use of a tool to aid the co-production of meaningful academic action plans by undergraduate nurses and their academic advisors.

Jon Painter & Sharon Frankland

Individual assignment feedback received

Reflection, self-assessment and synthesis of feedback

Co-production of personalised academic action plan

Assignment 1 feedback

Assignment 2 feedback

Assignment 3 feedback

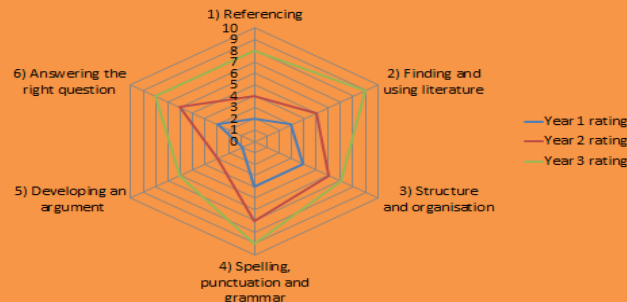
Assignment 4 feedback

Assignment 5 feedback

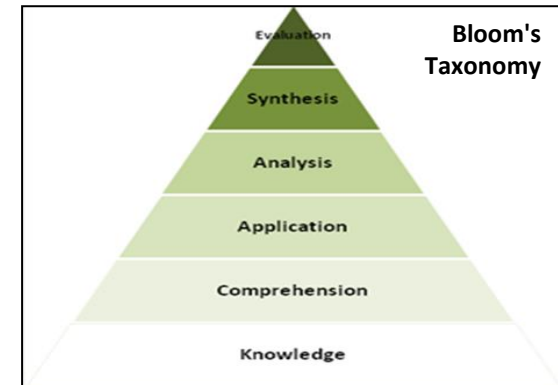
Assignment 6 feedback

Aspect of academic development	Level of competence (example statements)			Self ratings (0-10)			
	Low	Moderate	High	Column1	Year 1 rating	Year 2 rating	Year 3 rating
1) Referencing	I am unsure about how to reference according to APA guidelines	I am able to correctly cite and reference books and journals	I am able to correctly cite and reference all types of material	1) Referencing	2	4	8
2) Finding and using literature	I struggle to find suitable papers and am unsure how to use other people's work to support the points I want to make	I find and use references that are relevant to the topic but pay little attention to their quality	I can search effectively and use a wide range of high quality, contemporary literature that is relevant to the topic	2) Finding and using literature	3	5	9
3) Structure and organisation	My work has an introduction, middle and end but tends to 'bounce around' rather than flowing smoothly	My assignments are organised and structured but I do not always balance my word count across the learning outcomes	My work is logically structured. I include a brief introduction to set the scene and a conclusion that does not introduce any new information	3) Structure and organisation	4	6	7
4) Spelling, punctuation and grammar	My work contains a lot of spelling, grammar and punctuation errors and I tend to use informal language	My use of language is always clear but my work does contain a number of minor errors of this kind	I proof read my work so that it contains very few errors of this kind	4) Spelling, punctuation and grammar	4	7	9
5) Developing an argument	My essays contain descriptions of other people's views, or of my own opinions	I try to use other people's work to support my arguments but do not always get this right	My work shows evidence of critical thinking i.e. I present opposing perspectives on an issue before drawing a conclusion which has a sound rationale	5) Developing an argument	1	3	6
6) Answering the right question	I tend to write about the topic without fully understanding what the assignment brief is asking for	I tend to cover all the learning outcomes but can drift off topic or write too little or too much about each	I always meet the learning outcomes and take account of their weighting	6) Answering the right question	3	6	8

## Self-assessment of academic development



TARGET: What do I need to achieve?	STRATEGY: What actions would help me to achieve this?	SUPPORT: What help will I need to access?		
		People	Processes	Resources
GOAL 1				
GOAL 2				
GOAL 3				



## Feedback received

The participation agenda means more students now enter the BSC Nursing course from a diverse range of settings. To accommodate their differing levels of preparedness for higher education, the process for assessment, feedback and feedforward has been revised to promote the development of independent learners. Assignments are marked by different academics without reference to the student's previous work. As such students do not always link feedback together to provide a more holistic view of their abilities.

## Reflection & synthesis of feedback

Students are encouraged to reflect on their individual assignment feedback and assimilate this into a holistic self-assessment of their current level of competence in academic study skills. This aims to promote a deeper understanding of each piece of feedback, as well as the rehearsal of the meta-cognitive skills described by Bloom. Students rate themselves against 6 dimensions of academic writing generated by a small group of SHU academics. The electronic version of the tool then automatically plots a radar diagram, thus catering for differing learning styles. Additionally, the tool can be saved and re-visited each year to aid students' progression to the next (higher) academic level of study.

## Co-produced action plan

The self-assessment results is then jointly reviewed by the student and their academic advisor, before a developmental action plan is co-produced. This process is consistent with Kolb and Dewey's works on reflection, participation and progression to mastery in that, at the start of the course it raises awareness of the university's academic expectations. At year 2 it allows students to reflect on their recent work but then to focus on the most relevant aspects of their development. Whilst it is hoped that third year students will have (through engaging with this guided reflective process) developed the academic writing skills of a competent nurse.