The Psychological Literacy Compendium: an overview of practical activities

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Plan of Workshop

1. Introduction
2. Overview of compendium: features of case studies
3. Exemplar case studies
4. Sharing ideas / experiences
5. Further work and request for case studies
1. What is psychological literacy?

Cranney and Dunn (2011) the adaptive application of psychological science to meet personal and societal needs

McGovern et al. (2010) the graduate attributes (knowledge, skills, attitudes) or learning outcomes of the undergraduate psychology degree

Dunn (2008): “a critical thinker, someone who welcomes intellectual exchanges dealing with questions or problems linked with behaviour ...an amiable skeptic, but nonetheless insightful and reflective about their own and others' actions”
A common theme = psychological literacy in action

- Psychological knowledge / skills are for taking action, helping others and improving the lives we lead, not just about facts
- Beyond employment, individuals, communities and society in general can benefit from the ethical, scientific and critical approach adopted by Psychology graduates
- Psychologically literate people can use what they know about psychology to solve home-based, local, civic, national and global matters by looking to data instead of personal opinion
- Psychologically literate students write and speak well, possess research, information literacy, and technology skills, and collaborate well with others

...but how can we design and assess activities?
2. The Compendium: Overview / Features of Case Studies

Compendium of Practice = full versions of 18 case studies available online at http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/22906/
Categorised to allow easy comparison of different approaches

Categories:
- Topic area
- When activity takes place in curriculum
- Whether core, elective or optional
- Teaching and assessment strategies
Topic areas and level:

- Mental Health
- Social Psychology
- Developmental / Educational Psychology
- Research Methods, Psychological Enquiry, Psychology in Everyday Life
- Occupational Psychology, Employability, Placement, Work based learning, Volunteering and applied psychology, Experiential learning), PAL

Mainly at level six (final year undergrad) and elective, some voluntary extra-curricular. Only six case studies within core units.

- students could proceed through a degree without exposure to psychological literacy-focussed units - misses potential value to all students
Teaching and learning activities

Enquiry-based learning / PBL
Work experience
Design intervention in groups
Critique of media reports
Peer mentoring
Volunteering
Research apprentice volunteers
Peer-assisted learning
Placement year
Assessment methods

Pecha Kucha presentations
Reflection on work experience
PDP plan
Case study from group work
Evaluate intervention
Written critique of media reports
Media article
Reflective portfolios
Powerpoint presentation
Group prepares bid for service contract
Report + group presentation
Regular logs and poster presentation
Propose intervention
Reports for different audiences
Case study and change intervention

Important to define the attributes of psychological literacy that activities are designed to address

9 attributes that psychology graduates should display:

1. having a well-defined vocabulary and knowledge of the subject matter of psychology
2. valuing the intellectual challenges required to use scientific thinking and the disciplined analysis of information to evaluate alternative courses of action
3. taking a creative and amiable sceptical approach to problem solving
4. applying psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues in work, relationships, and the broader community
5. acting ethically
6. being competent in using and evaluating information and technology
7. communicating effectively in different modes and with many different audiences
8. recognizing, understanding, and fostering respect for diversity
9. being insightful and reflective about one's own and others' behaviour and mental processes
Majority of case studies address 4th and 9th attributes: employability and reflection

Some attributes covered in most case studies in a subsidiary way: 1st and 6th attributes, relating to subject matter and evaluation of information

Surprisingly some attributes rarely featured: 5th and 8th attributes on ethics and diversity - need for these in the revised addition of the Compendium

Two attributes not included in McGovern’s attributes need to be added: global citizenship and a ‘supporting and caring’ attribute (key motivator for many students)

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3. Example Activities to Engage Students with Psychological Literacy
Case study and change intervention

Students are supported through lectures and discussions to apply theoretical models of psychology to improve wellbeing in a workplace of their choice.

Adopt the role of an organisational consultant, and reflect critically on the relevance of psychology in the real world of work.
Dr Bronach Hughes & Prof Marcia Worrell
Level 6 Experiential learning
Students volunteer to run Pyramid Clubs for children 7-14 years with early signs of mental ill health. After training, students gain experience of working with children, and reflect on impact of psychological theories in real contexts
PYRAMID CLUBS
building friendships
creating confidence

Therapeutic clubs for children and young people aged 7-14 who are shy, quiet, withdrawn or anxious.

“The children love their Pyramid Club and make it their own. Activities are planned around the children’s need to interact socially with others. It is a wonderful experience to watch the group grow over the 10-week period and to see the children developing their confidence and self esteem”.

Teacher, London school

uwl.ac.uk/pyramid
pyramid@uwl.ac.uk
020 8231 2930
Dr Pauli & Prof Worrell
- audio clips of student thoughts
‘A key outcome of undergraduate psychology education is for students to be psychologically literate for the world of work’ (UK: BPS and HEA)

- Many employers do not know the difference between the skills of psychology students and other students ...do your students?!
- ‘Awareness of ‘Psychological Literacy’ shown to significantly enhance employability’ (BPS / HEA)
- Awareness of how psychology affects your self and your behaviour with others is important in other areas of your life post-degree too
Ask students to reflect upon and identify psychological literacy

Awareness is important for job-hunting, interviews, and subsequent employment

Students identify *where* skills and knowledge are developed

Discuss to what extent students are psychologically literate?

how you have used knowledge/skills from the psychology degree in work

examples from part-time / temporary / voluntary work experiences
In which units are these skills and knowledge developed? (in pairs + give eg)

Formal + informal learning activities (consider seminars, labs, lectures, assessment, study groups):

- Organisational understanding
- Communication skills
- Project management
- Teamworking
- Research and analysis
- Critical thinking
- Problem solving
- Personal attributes
- Numeracy and IT skills
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For example…
4. Sharing ideas / experiences
5. Summary: further work and request for case studies
Summary and further work

Need to embed and assess psychological literacy throughout degree - all areas + levels - not just optional or employability units

Need to evaluate effectiveness of activities e.g. pre and post measures
Further Europlat Activities

We’re producing revised ‘Compendium of Case Studies’ …international contributions needed!

Europlat bids for funds to set up a European Network for Teachers and Lecturers - Conference Salzburg September 2017
Resources

Websites:
Europlat
https://www.facebook.com/Europlat/?fref=photo
Psychological Literacy: a compendium of practice
http://eprints.bournemouth.ac.uk/22906
Coming soon from Prof Cranney!
http://www.psychologicalliteracy.com/

Publications:
Mair, C., Taylor, J. & Hulme, J. 2013. An Introductory Guide to Psychological Literacy and Psychologically Literate Global Citizenship. HEA.