Dr. Vincent Ichoku is Senior Lecturer, Faculty of Health and Social Care, London South Bank University.
For correspondence: e-mail: Ichoku@lbSU.ac.uk

Vincent Ichoku
Application of Self-Directed Learning in Health and Social Care Education: Report of a case study

Mature students freely negotiated methods for achieving their individual learning goals and this approach is probably the most successful in helping them to fulfill their full potential.
The implications of self-directed learning continue to be realized in a variety of settings. It is that it involves handing over learning to the student, which challenges the basic tenet of teaching-learning that health and social care education would depend on the ability of the teacher or facilitator on one hand and the student's own enthusiasm and commitment to the agreement on the other. The onus is on the teacher to assist the student in learning, not the reverse. Learning is a dynamic process that can be facilitated through the self-directed learning contract.

Work placement mentors

The preparation of health and social care students to perform the role of self-directed learning facilitator is simple and straightforward. A self-directed learning contract can be written to ensure that the mentor will provide guidance and supervision. The role of placement mentors/mentors is critical as the introduction of a self-directed learning contract and the student to manage their learning, and the teacher to provide guidance and support. The introduction of a self-directed learning contract to health and social care education is not a new concept, but in the current employment environment, it may be opposed by colleagues...

Minimising difficulties

To minimise the difficulties it has been recommended that mentors should be mindful of the needs and expectations of those responsible for the development of self-directed learning contracts and consider the implications for education as a whole.

Analysis and outcome of the self-directed learning contract

The aim of the self-directed learning contract was to enable students to take an active role in their learning. The project was divided into two main parts. The first part involved the introduction of a self-directed learning contract to the students, which was then followed by a self-directed learning contract to the students. The second part involved the introduction of a self-directed learning contract to the students, which was then followed by a self-directed learning contract to the students.

The self-directed learning contract was carried out over a period of five weeks. The first week involved the introduction of the contract to the students, followed by a self-directed learning contract to the students. The students were given guidance on the use of specific approaches to promote independence and empowerment in a community setting.

The self-directed learning contract was carried out over a period of five weeks. The first week involved the introduction of the contract to the students, followed by a self-directed learning contract to the students. The second part involved the introduction of a self-directed learning contract to the students, which was then followed by a self-directed learning contract to the students.

The self-directed learning contract was carried out over a period of five weeks. The first week involved the introduction of the contract to the students, followed by a self-directed learning contract to the students. The second part involved the introduction of a self-directed learning contract to the students, which was then followed by a self-directed learning contract to the students.
Helen Lee is Development and Training Manager at Tacade
For correspondence e-mail: helen@tacade.co.uk

Helen Lee

Young people challenging the culture of binge drinking

Peer education is an excellent way of involving and empowering students at the same time as prioritising alcohol education. Tacade is working with over thirty secondary schools to develop effective models.

Tacade is a leading voluntary sector organisation in the field of personal, social, health and citizenship education, with over thirty years of experience supporting alcohol and drug education with young people.

Tacade (www.tacade.com) provides support for professionals, professional groups, parents and carers by delivering effective training, consultancy, project management and publications.

Alcohol education
The organisation is working with over thirty secondary schools to help them develop peer education projects focusing on alcohol education. Young peer educators in these schools recognise that alcohol use is a major issue for many teenagers. They want to help challenge the culture of binge drinking.

For many years the focus of drug education in schools has been on illegal substances yet alcohol is the most commonly used drug amongst teenagers. The Tacade project aims to increase the focus on alcohol education.

Effective method
Studies have shown that peer education can be a particularly effective method of drug education. The Health Development Agency "Drug use prevention among young people: a review of evidence" (2001) noted that "Overall, research results appear to be positive and suggest that peer-led approaches are more effective than other approaches."

Government guidance for schools recognises the value of peer education. For example, the English guidance states that "Pears are often seen as a credible source of information and advice... research shows that often the pupils who benefit most from peer education are the peer educators themselves" (Drugs Guidance for schools, DfEE, 2004). In addition, other documents have noted that "there is some suggestion that peer-led prevention programmes can enhance teacher-led programmes" (Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy for England, Cabinet Office, 2004). The Welsh guidance states that "research shows that young people value approaches that provide access to peers and credible adults... in addition to teachers/youth workers." (Welsh Assembly Government, Circular 17/02, Alcohol Concern, www.alcoholconcern.org.uk, provides a range of informative factsheets providing statistical information. "Young People's Drinking" is particularly useful.

Effective models
In July 2003 Tacade was funded by Diageo Great Britain to work with four secondary schools in England and Wales to develop effective models of alcohol peer education.

The work with these four pilot schools, in Cardiff, Melbourn, Leicester and London, was informed by a review of relevant literature and a scoping activity to identify existing examples of alcohol peer alcohol education work with young people. The substantial work with schools began in January 2004 and much of the peer educator's work continued into the Autumn term 2004.

Lancaster School
The work at the Lancaster School in Leicester is described here as an example of how the effective models of alcohol peer education were developed. The Lancaster School is an urban comprehensive with 1,250 male students from a variety of different cultural and ethnic backgrounds including white, south Asian and Somali. The school had not previously been involved in any peer education work.

Nine young men from Year 9 were invited to become peer educators. They were chosen by the staff for their 'street cred', communication skills and ability to connect to a process.

Initially, Tacade facilitated two two-hour training sessions with the students and one awareness session with the staff involved (teachers, school nurse and a learning mentor). Five out of the original nine students selected chose to become peer educators, along with one additional Year 9 student recruited by the peer educators.

Boys on Booze

The students created the 'BOB - Boys on Booze' peer education team. A variety of staff, particularly the Assistant Head and the Head of Year 9, supported the peer educators. The school also had strong support for the project from the Leicester City Advisory Teacher for Drugs.

The BOB team has met twice a week after school to carry out research. They feed that they are reliable, represent a range of personalities and have 'street cred'. They have designed and distributed 'Pink Elephant' factual leaflets about alcohol to staff and students.

In September 2004 the peer educators started the year with a PowerPoint presentation to Year 7 students in Assemblies. This was followed up by interactive peer education activities. The BOB team plans to be involved in training new peer educators during 2005 and want to set up an information point in the school.

The BOB team
The peer educators enjoyed being part of