

How to...Have a Successful Peer Placement

What is a Peer Placement?

Two students work together on what would have been a placement for one student. They do the work that one student would have done with enrichment from the peer learning experience. The placement focuses on the professional skills of team work and collaboration.

The clinical competencies, as measured in the Clinical Evaluation Report, are the same. Each student works towards their own personal clinical goals.

What are the advantages?

For the University and for Clinical Educators, peer placements are resource efficient: more students can gain good clinical experience with fewer CEs and fewer clients.

For students, the advantages are reported to include:

- Greater confidence
- Better recall of theory from lectures
- Improved observation skills
- Gaining broader and deeper knowledge
- Learning from each other
- Seeing a broader range of clients

What to expect

On your peer placement, having the right expectations is a major part of ensuring its success.

- You will be working very closely with your peer, so go out for a coffee and talk together about your clinical experience and expectations
- You will have to establish a 'professional' relationship with your peer, which may be quite different to the way you have worked together before, be prepared for this
- You will be observing each other working and giving each other feedback. Build on your experiences earlier in the course when you have done this in clinic
- You will have to interact with your CE and other staff not just with each other
- You may have to be more independent and take the initiative more, without competing with each other
- Your CE may leave you to work together and ask you for feedback and evaluation
- You may be asked to do a different task while your peer is working with a client e.g. review a case file, evaluate a session plan, or one of you may do more assessment and one more intervention. You can each benefit from the other's experience through discussion and shared reflection.

Tips

Establish with your CE how and when they will give you feedback and how you can get equal access to their time

Think about what you say to your peer and how you would feel if they said that to you

Ask your peer how they thought the session went before giving your feedback

Keep talking to each other about how it's going

Useful reference: Grundy, K., (2004) Peer Placements. In Brumfitt, S.,(ed) *Innovations in Professional education for Speech and Language Therapy*. London: Whurr

How to....clinical skills guides 2008

The Clinical Educators of The Speech and Language Sciences Section, School of Education Communication and Language Sciences, Newcastle University