

Involving students in Research

Melanie Packer, Senior Lecturer, Birmingham City University (BCU)
melanie.packer@bcu.ac.uk @MelaniePacker72

November 2020

***THEMES FROM INTERVIEWS
ON STUDENT RESEARCH
PLACEMENT***



PILOT PROJECT

Focus on the understanding of early concepts.

To be delivered as a universal whole school intervention.

Involved teaching staff, SLTs and students on third year placement.

Student input: Data collection and management

Supporting the delivery of 12 week intervention to
children aged 4-5yrs old.

Interviews conducted with the students (n=3) and with the teaching staff (n=5).

INTERVIEWS

Took place within the school and the university.

Audio recorded and individual interviews lasted approx 45 mins each.

Conducted and transcribed by independent student psychologist and speech and language therapist independent on the project.

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Semi-structured interview consisting of the following topics:

Knowledge of the interview and the training

Evaluation of a whole school approach.

Collaboration with teaching staff/students/SLTs

Parent engagement

Child engagement

Resources

Student placement

THEMATIC ANALYSIS

Knowledge transfer

Embedding meaning through play

Empowering others to enable ownership

Developing into the confident practitioner

KNOWLEDGE TRANSFER

Sharing of knowledge and expertise within both health and education.

Open dialogue.

Appreciation of different professions working within a busy environment.

Benefits of peer placement.

It is really important to collaboratively work with teachers so that we're all on the same page and everyone understands each other and why someone is doing something.

You understand each other more and you understand each others profession and outlook.

It's an in-school intervention so it really brings health and education together, which is going to bring about the most change. You get to know the teachers quite well and I think it opens up a dialogue as well like they feel they can come and talk to you about things that they find difficult or they've had an idea and what do you think about that and then you get ideas yourself from more people about what works.

Its working in a school so obviously there's challenges in other areas that teachers are assessing and find important as well.

EMPOWERING OTHERS

Whose intervention is it? Who is responsible?

Students doing too much and teachers finding aspects challenging.

Being proactive and confident enough to problem solve and work with teachers to empower them.

I don't know if there was a misunderstanding of the intervention like was it our intervention or their intervention? Some of the resources they were all happy to take on but for others and the functional aspects and the activation felt like that was our responsibility It was like crossing over that responsibility to them so they could run with it and empowering them to do it in the future.

Because you're not there all the time you have to trust that things are happening.

I think we were doing that for longer than we should have been sort of giving them power and control over their own intervention but they did as soon as we mentioned it the TA took it up and started doing it. It's not that they didn't want to do it, it was partly us for just doing it but instead being like can someone start doing this now?

I think it was more part of developing myself as an SLT and growing confidence to sit down with teachers and be like ok what's going well yeah this is going really well what are you finding more difficult yeah that's what we recognised as well.

DEVELOPING INTO A CONFIDENT PRACTITIONER

Difference in perceived independence and responsibility.

Reflections of the challenges working in collaborative setting.

Uncertainty about meeting clinical placement learning outcomes.

Being proactive and owning the problem.

Confident in applying research to practice

I think because we were so detached from university during placement so you don't necessarily have that support. So I think sometimes it did feel like we weren't hugely supported but if we looked for that support it was there so it wasn't like it wasn't there and we spoke to XXX and XXX so there was support so we had to be very proactive throughout the research, which you need to take responsibility for.

My other placement days I felt like I knew what I was doing but I guess that's part of working life it's not necessarily a bad thing. I didn't feel like that at the end maybe because we took control of it ourselves, meeting with the teacher and then talking about that stuff and meeting with the Teaching Assistants.

I was a bit concerned whether what we were doing for WA was being taken into account by the clinicians because we weren't working with our clinicians it felt very separate to placement sometimes and I think that's again whose responsibility is what and it felt like our responsibility to tell them what we been doing, which was fine.

She asked me to map it onto the learning outcomes everything that we had done and as I was doing it I thought oh that actually matches quite alright especially the collaborative learning and working with other professionals and like theory to practice because we were having to explain to TAs the theoretical underpinning of why this was important and it did merge into the Los really well and I had a lot to reflect about as well.

I would say to any student definitely take the opportunity if it comes your way it felt quite important to be involved in something like that and sets you up for later life. As a speech therapist now I wouldn't be ooh I don't want to be involved in that I'd be very open to doing it.

It feels good to be part of something that's the bigger picture of SLT and you're doing something for your profession bridging the gap that evidence base to prove what were doing it worthwhile.

It was a great experience and I really enjoyed the data collection side to it and seeing that side of it cos you talk about it at university but we don't actually get to actively participate in research and its opened my eye to being involved in this in the future and not being scared of it.