Enhancing postgraduate learning with intensive mode teaching

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Enhancing Postgraduate Learning with Intensive Mode Teaching

Sally Male, Stuart Crispin, Phil Hancock, Jeremy Leggoe, Caroline Baillie, Cara MacNish, Dev Ranmuthugala, Firoz Alam

Introduction

With intensive mode teaching (IMT) students participate in classes on fewer days and longer on each day than traditionally in the discipline.

The Problem

Little guidance is available on how to support students’ learning in intensive mode.

Method

The frameworks of threshold concepts and threshold capabilities were used (Baillie, Bowden, & Meyer, 2013; Meyer & Land, 2003).

Results

The majority (52%) of coordinators who participated in the national survey reported that their IMT units were at the postgraduate level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Main benefits</th>
<th>Main problems</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Bonding: development of a learning community</td>
<td>Students not understanding the load</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Immersion: retreat-like focus</td>
<td>Students finding it exhausting</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Elasticity of activities: allowing for long interactive activities of flexible duration</td>
<td>Students not managing studies / preparing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Continuity</td>
<td>Non-inclusive: difficult to catch up</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Opportunity for exposure to practice</td>
<td>Difficulty finding time for group-work</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Freeing time for other activities</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key finding 1:</th>
<th>Key finding 2:</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>With respect to student experience, coordinators reported:</td>
<td>In the studies in the postgraduate IMT units, students reported that the following enhanced their development of threshold capabilities:</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to ask questions</td>
<td>Demonstrated relevance to practice</td>
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<td>Self-management</td>
<td>Timing of feedback from assessments</td>
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<tr>
<td>Opportunity to learn from peers</td>
<td>Carefully selected set reading</td>
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<td>The position of the unit in the year</td>
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</table>

Recommendations

People teaching or supporting postgraduate students with IMT should:
- Support students to develop a learning community including learning from peers and asking questions
- Focus on thresholds to plan set reading and/or preparation, assessments, and feedback
- Expose students to practice
- Support students to manage their time and studies

References


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