Integration through practice: Do students integrate and apply their first year knowledge to practice as evidenced in an ePortfolio?

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Background: General Pharmaceutical Council (GPhC) Standard Outcome requirements for the initial training and education of pharmacists require students to develop a reflective approach to their personal and developing professional practice in order to: review and monitor their performance; create and implement personal development plans. Integration of science into practice is a key aspect of recent changes to pharmacy education. Training in these reflective skills at an undergraduate level fosters good practice, and may help in student integration of science and practice.

Description of work: The new MPharm course at one U.K. school of pharmacy adopted PebblePad as their ePortfolio. Learning outcomes, linked to GPhC Standard 10 learning outcomes, are addressed over nine reflections (4 x 250 words and 5 x 800 words) in Year 1. Three reflections are linked to student placement experiences in primary care (1 day), and hospital and community environments (3 days each).

Two first year learning outcomes include:

- Demonstration of professionalism showing awareness of the relevant codes of professional conduct
- Application of areas of learning from course modules within their professional experience placements.

Proposed evaluation: We aim to explore the extent to which the ePortfolio reflections can demonstrate students’ engagement in the reflective process against their learning outcomes and show spontaneous integration of course material. Focussing particularly on the application of learning from course modules within their professional experience placements, we will explore how the students’ view integration and apply their course material during their first year. We are seeking to thematically analyse the aspects of integration by examining the reflections submitted to the ePortfolio for each of the nine reflective submissions, with a focus on course content themes applied to placement experiences.