

Coursework: Coursework Tasks (Learning Outcome 4)

Kingston
Business
School

Assignment Briefing (level 3)

Module Name	Business Studies
Module Code	XS3002
Assignment Title	Coursework Tasks (Learning Outcome 4)
Type of Submission	Report
The weighting of the assignment in the overall module grade	20%
Word Count/Time allocation (for presentations)	1500 words
Issue Date	T2 Week 1 2
Submission Date	T2 Week 9
Date of Feedback to Students	T3 Week 2
Where feedback can be found	Returned to students in the class

T2 Week 9

15%

Assignment Task

Case Study:

Multiskilling at Rossett NHS Trust

Introduction

This case looks at an attempt to introduce multiskilled, ward-based teams of support workers in a Rossett NHS Trust hospital, a medium-sized hospital in the UK. Although only directly involving about 250 people in an organisation employing over 2800 staff, the change represented part of a wider, strategic transformation in the NHS with its focus on human resource issues. The driving force is an attempt to realise a continual improvement in quality and value for money.

The Microcontext: a Rossett NHS Trust hospital

The case is set in Rossett NHS Trust which provides a full range of acute and midwifery services to a population of about a quarter of a million people. The Trust's income is around £70 million a year and it employs over 2800 personnel (about 1650 full-time equivalents). Of its employees, 62 percent work part-time; over 80 percent of all personnel are female.

The scope and scale of change

It was proposed that all domestic and pottering staff were to be based at ward level rather than, as at present, in a central 'pool'. Most would require additional training to undertake food serving, cleaning and pottering roles. Staff would then undertake a wider array of tasks and be required to embrace flexibility and teamwork. All existing formal status and pay differentials between members of Hotel Services, with the exception of management, would be removed. As a consequence of generic working, many staff was to be upgraded and all would receive a basic pay rise representing 2 percent for porters and 8 percent for domestic staff. Performance pay was to be based on attendance. Overtime and weekend work would be carefully monitored in an attempt to reduce costs. Some staff would be required to change their shift pattern and the total hours they work in any one week. The change directly involved about 250 people and included taking on an extra 35,000 hours work a year previously allocated to nursing assistants.

Talk on the ground

It was thought that the successful implementation of generic working would bring many potential benefits from a managerial perspective. Almost without exception, managers stressed its positive features. The Finance Director, Selwyn Fisher, argued that successful implementation would help to 'provide good value for money' and 'make cost savings'. It would ensure, for the time being at least, competitiveness with external commercial players. The single grade and pay spine, which would apply to all 250 generic workers, would reduce status differentials and simplify the highly complex bonus schemes that had evolved. From an operational point of view it would bring enormous benefits of flexibility and would simplify work schedule. Managers argued that it would serve to 'even out' the workload for porters and improve efficiency by avoiding 'waiting for action time' and 'wasted journeys' and other 'duplication of effort'. Therefore, not inconsiderable cost savings could be released. It would formalise control, especially over porters who are 'difficult to track down'. It might, for example, stop porters using their 'pull' over nursing staff. The HRM Director, Patrick Davenport, felt it would improve worker motivation as porters would 'feel part of a team' and 'be included if chocolates were given out or nights out were planned'. They would 'take a pride in their work' and 'be recognised at ward level'. One manager responsible for its implementation suggested that generic working is 'going to make it very clear what I am providing and to whom'.

Denise Lipton, the manager responsible for establishing the pilot scheme which ran on one large ward, argued that 'The domestics think it's a great idea', 'Women will go for it to see men cleaning' and 'they really enjoy the varied workload'. Others attempted to explain why staff was positive about change with comments like, 'Now they don't know what other duties they're going to be doing and they really enjoy that, so their job satisfaction has gone up'. However, managers were far less effusive when asked to identify likely reasons for, or sources of, resistance to implementation of generic working. Issues focused on likely demarcation concerns at the interface between Hotel Services and other groups such as nurses and within, Hotel Services, between porters, cleaners and domestic staff.

were made and plan altered. The pilot involved about 12 domestic and portering staff. The original aim was to appoint a team leader who would allocate duties as they arose. This was thought to have created unnecessary sources of uncertainty and a system of management allocation of tasks on a more permanent basis was soon adopted in the pilot. Those managing the change did not gather the whole workforce together to discuss the changes. Such a process, they felt, would prove difficult. Instead, they believed that if it could be made to work well on the pilot scheme then the good news would spread and people would come on board. Thus they relied quite heavily on the undoubted power of the informal communication process as opposed to numerous team briefings. They also utilized the staff notice board to display rotas and other important developments.

Teething Problems

Many of the porters, almost exclusively male, quite openly expressed their unwillingness to undertake cleaning duties, which some thought were 'women's' work'. This gender issue raised its head in many consultations between porters and managers and was a frequent topic of conversation between porters. One manager commented, 'Porters believe the girls are going to be running off doing pottering duties all the time and they are going to spend all their time cleaning....and they've got these views from the union'. Other 'demarcation' issues were also brought to the fore during the pilot scheme. A group of domestics, known as 'ward hostesses', enjoyed a somewhat privileged position among their colleagues whose work focused almost exclusively on cleaning, involving little or no contact with patients or clinical personnel. The subgroups comprising the generic worker role were often referred to as 'tribes' by managers from across the hospital. One Hotel Services manager said, 'We arranged awareness sessions with nursing staff but no one turned up to them'. One manager, expressing a certain powerlessness, summarised the nature of the problems: 'It is about boundaries between groups. We have nurses, PAMs (professionals allied to medicine), physiotherapists, doctors – all these groups, and making them all work in teams is impossible.'

Denise Lipton suggested domestic staff believe that this is simply 'a cost improvement exercise'. The Trade Union (UNISON) convenor, Collin Ambrose, openly and persistently recorded his disapproval of the extent of the proposed changes. It strongly opposed generic working from the outset and advised its members not to facilitate its implementation. Such a change would fundamentally alter the terms and conditions of employees and would necessitate contractual changes and facilitate local determination of pay and conditions. This would contravene national union policy and UNISON's clear position regarding local bargaining. Employees had not yet accepted the principle, let alone the practice, of local determination of pay and conditions.

In a series of meetings between managers in Hotel Services and UNISON representatives debate was often hostile and, allegedly, personal. Costs of the changes were not worked out at the start and few records were kept of meetings. There was little that was signed and agreed by both sides and because of this, there was a lot of argument about things that one side thought had been agreed earlier.

Tension before the ballot

The pilot scheme ended with a union ballot aimed at ascertaining the staff's position *vis-à-vis*

Your analysis of the case should not stray outside these areas of theory

Read the accompanying case study and

i) **Identify** the **leadership and organisational behavior issues** revealed in the case, drawing only from areas of theory listed above. At least three areas should be used to support your analysis.

ii) Research, theories or perspectives that help to understand, **evaluate** the leadership and organisational behavioural issues you identified.

Consider the factors and issues involved and evaluate and interpret the situation in the light of theory. This may include evaluation of policies, procedures, plans, activities, your actions and those of others, as are relevant;

iii) **Draw conclusions** and **recommend** suitable actions or practice that might be implemented. Support your discussion, analysis and recommendations by reference to research findings or other relevant theory and literature.

Background/Context

Guidance on what is required

The paper must include

- The paper should be written in academic style
- Section which defines the concepts/paradigms being used to evaluate the case study
- Following discussion of theoretical concepts, there should be a number of paragraphs where this theory is applied to the situation within the case, using it to evaluate actions, responses, behaviour, etc and to draw conclusions about possible reasons, explanations, weaknesses etc.
- A section of about a page should summarise the conclusions that have been drawn and make recommendations to improve the situation, basing these on referenced theory.
- In-text references should be provided and a full list of references using Harvard format.
- ***No cutting and pasting from websites of any kind is permitted,***
- ***No copying or plagiarism is permitted***

	Task Fulfillment	Knowledge and Understanding	Argument, Critical Thinking and Use of Evidence	Written Communication
Excellent	85-100%	The student demonstrates an exceptionally comprehensive, detailed, and deep grasp of key concepts at this level. When required, the student can apply conceptual knowledge with consummate skill. There is an impressive quantity of accurate factual, historical and contextual detail.	The argument is developed logically and skillfully, offering a response that is substantially critical, imaginative and insightful for this level. The work shows an exceptional ability to bring together evidence in support of the argument.	Written communication is extremely impressive. The work is exceptionally fluent, well-structured, accurate and precise, and shows a very sophisticated grasp of appropriate subject-specific terminology. There are very few, if any, language slips.
	70-84%	The student demonstrates a comprehensive, detailed grasp of key concepts at this level. When required, the student can apply conceptual knowledge with considerable skill. Factual, historical and contextual detail is plentiful and accurate.	The argument is developed logically and shows excellent critical insight for this level. The work shows an impressive ability to bring together evidence in support of argument	Written communication is extremely successful. The work is fluent, well-structured, accurate and precise, and shows a very confident grasp of appropriate subject-specific terminology. There may be occasional language slips but they do not impede communication.
Very Good	60-69%	The student demonstrates a very good knowledge and understanding of key concepts at this level. When required, the student can apply conceptual knowledge very skillfully. Factual, historical and/or contextual information is included wherever appropriate and is substantially accurate.	The argument is developed logically and demonstrates a good level of critical thinking for this level. The writer is able to bring together evidence in support of the argument.	Written communication is very successful. The work is largely fluent, well-structured, accurate and precise, and shows a sound grasp of appropriate subject-specific terminology. The noticeable error is occasional and only evident when complex ideas need expression.
Good	50-59%	The student demonstrates a sound knowledge and understanding of key concepts but there may be minor gaps. When required, the student can apply conceptual knowledge with adequate skill. There is a reasonable amount of factual, historical and/or contextual information, which contains few serious inaccuracies.	The argument sometimes lacks coherence. Some attempt at critical thinking is made but evaluative writing tasks may be too descriptive. The writer is not always successful at bringing together evidence in support of the argument.	Communication is successful. The work is reasonably fluent, well-structured, accurate and precise, and shows some grasp of appropriate subject-specific terminology. Error is evident in places although this does not impede understanding of the main points.
Fair	40-49%	The student demonstrates a fair knowledge and understanding of key concepts at this level but there may be significant gaps. When required, the student's ability to apply conceptual knowledge is only ever partly successful. An attempt is made to include factual, historical and/or contextual information, although it is likely that this will contain inaccuracies.	There is only limited evidence of logical argument or critical thinking. The writer is seldom able to bring together evidence in support of argument.	Written communication is only partly successful. The work is moderately fluent and shows a fairly basic grasp of appropriate terminology. There is significant error in grammar, syntax and terminology in several places.

Avoiding plagiarism

When you write an essay, report or dissertation you should always cite the published sources to which you quote, refer to or use as evidence, otherwise, you are likely to be committing plagiarism, which is a form of academic misconduct with potentially very serious consequences. References need to be made both within the text and in a list at the end.

The aim in doing this is to ensure that somebody reading your work can easily find these sources for themselves. This applies to whether you are using a book, a report, a journal article or an Internet site. You will probably know from your own experience how much easier it is to find a reference when a reading list or bibliography is clear and unambiguous. There is help available from the library and online, including a range of videos such as those given below:

https://mykingston.kingston.ac.uk/library/help_and_training/Pages/referencing.aspx.

<http://www.citethemrightonline.com/basics>

Do remember you can submit your work as many times as you like before the final deadline. It is a good idea to check your Originality Report and ensure that any potential plagiarism is eradicated for your work by rewriting in your own words and referencing correctly. The staff on the BLASC desk in the LRC will be able to advise on this. Here you can find out how to access your Originality Report:

https://Canvas.kingston.ac.uk/bbcswebdav/institution/Support/Student_Guide_to_Turnitin_v2.pdf?target=blank

Additional helpful resources can be found here:

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1yYf8AihndI>

The best way to avoid academic misconduct or plagiarism is to use your own words at all times; do not cut and paste from other work.

Illness or other mitigating circumstances

By submitting an assignment you are declaring yourself fit to take the assessment, therefore, please make sure that if you are unwell you understand our mitigating circumstances process. The most important thing to do is keep us informed if you are experiencing problems! See our regulations on this link:

<http://www.kingston.ac.uk/aboutkingstonuniversity/howtheuniversityworks/policiesandregulations>

Group work and academic misconduct

Work submitted by a group is the responsibility of the group as a whole. In the unfortunate event of the work being judged to have been plagiarised, the only circumstance in which it is possible that the responsibility for the misconduct would only fall on the group member who actually committed it, would be if there was clear evidence that that member had dishonestly misled the rest of the group as to the source of his/her contribution. This would require clear