

## NET2021 Conference

### Live session full abstracts

#### Theme Session 2A

#### Education in a global pandemic

2Ai, 10:30 - 12:20, 1 September 2021

Innovation paper

#### COVID vaccination centres as placements for Pre-Registration Nursing students

Jane Hopping and Paul Newcombe, University of Roehampton and Jane Woollard, South West London Covid-19 Vaccination programme

**Promotional abstract:** This session presents an innovative project in which Pre-Registration student nurses attended clinical placements across mass vaccination centres in South West London. At a time when placement availability is reduced, this innovative collaborative approach provided a solution allowing students to benefit from a unique experience to develop their skills, whilst also allowing them to contribute in the wider pandemic effort. The project required students to undertake a bespoke training programme and provided a supervision framework to support them whilst in practice. Regular feedback was gained allowing recommendations to be made about how to involve students in future vaccination programmes.

**Background, context and evidence base for the innovation, including, where possible, its international relevance:** Throughout the pandemic there has been a documented reduction in clinical placement availability for Pre-Registration student nurses, resulting in providers of Nurse Education considering alternative approaches to traditional placements (Health Education England, 2021; Nursing & Midwifery Council, 2021a). There is minimal literature considering the involvement of student nurses in vaccine administration, however the guidance provided in the UK permits administration of these vaccines by student nurses (Nursing & Midwifery Council, 2021b; Royal College of Nursing, 2021). This project demonstrates how an innovative approach has addressed this gap in knowledge by adopting a new approach to student nurse involvement in vaccination programmes and making recommendations that can be used to allow others to adopt similar strategies nationally and internationally.

**Aim/focus of the innovation:** The focus of the innovation was to provide Pre-Registration student nurses with a unique opportunity to gain insight into the set-up and management of a COVID-19 vaccination centre and enable them to participate in vaccine administration. Learning gained from the experiences of these student nurses will then be used to make recommendations about the involvement of student nurses in the administration of vaccinations in the future and seek to inspire others to consider the wider learning opportunities available for Pre-Registration student nurses in vaccination centres.

**Implementation of the innovation:** A collaborative approach was adopted in the implementation of this unique opportunity, involving the Nursing Team at the University of Roehampton, Sutton Training Hub and NHS South West London CCG. Identified placement opportunities included participating in setting up new vaccination centres, gaining experience

in the management of a COVID-19 vaccination centre and vaccine administration. A COVID-19 training practicum was created for the students involving online and face-to-face learning, which was then supplemented by onsite training and competency assessment. Students were supported in their placements by a Practice Supervisor and the nursing team from the University of Roehampton.

**Methods used to assess the innovation:** Before the placement, students completed a survey where they detailed their thoughts and expectations about the placement, particularly how they felt about administering vaccinations and their experiences of completing the practicum. Initial feedback on the innovation has been gained through link lecturer support and online forums. These will continue to run throughout the placement to allow continual evaluation of the innovation and to ensure that the students have access to support and guidance. At the end of the placement the students will be asked to complete an end-of-placement evaluation survey to gain further understanding of their experiences.

**Key findings:** Initial findings indicate that the students were excited about commencing their placements, expressing that this was a unique opportunity to make a contribution to the wider pandemic effort. The practicum was evaluated as informative and useful, however, students felt it contained a lot of information that at times was difficult to understand and required further reading and clarification. Forum discussions exploring initial placement perceptions have been positive with students enjoying applying knowledge gained from the COVID-19 practicum to clinical practice. Final findings are not yet available as the project is ongoing, however these will be included in the session.

**Three key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme:**

- This innovative project identifies unique learning opportunities available in COVID-19 vaccination centres, demonstrating how these placements provide opportunities to develop knowledge and skills in the administration of vaccines and in the management of a vaccination centre.
- The project demonstrates how collaborative and innovative working across organisations can be used to create unique placement opportunities for students at a time when placement capacity is restricted.
- Exploring the students' views in relation to their placements also challenges historical cultures that exist around vaccine administration by student nurses and provides recommendations about how students can be involved in future vaccination programmes.

**References:**

Health Education England (2021) Nursing Student Support Guidance During Covid-19. Available at: <https://www.hee.nhs.uk/covid-19/nursing-midwifery> [Accessed: 9.3.2021].

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2021a) Current emergency and recovery programme standards. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/education-standards/current-emergency-and-recovery-programme-standards.pdf> [Accessed: 9.3.2021].

Nursing and Midwifery Council (2021b) Information about vaccines. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/news/coronavirus/vaccines/> [Accessed: 9.3.2021].

Royal College of Nursing (2021) RCN Position on who should administer the Covid-19 vaccine and where. Available at: <https://www.rcn.org.uk/covid-19/rcn-position/who-should-administer-the-covid-19-vaccine-and-where> [Accessed: 9.3.2021].

**Keywords:** Student, Nurse, COVID-19, Vaccine, Placement.

2Aii, 10:30 - 12:20, 1 September 2021

Innovation paper

## A blended learning approach to practice placements in an education setting: A culture shift

Gerry Scott and Karen Stevens, Sheffield Hallam University

**Promotional abstract:** This presentation will discuss an innovative, blended learning approach to practice placements with an education focus in the Allied Health department at Sheffield Hallam University. The placement involved BSc and MSc Pre-Registration Physiotherapy students and challenged both staff and students to change the culture of traditional practice placements. Recommendations will be made for the use of a blended learning approach to practice placements across Healthcare settings as well as ideas for enabling a culture shift for post-COVID Healthcare Education.

**Background, context and evidence base for the innovation, including, where possible, its international relevance:** The COVID-19 pandemic has greatly impacted on students' practice placements in Healthcare across the globe. Workforce shortages mean it is vital that Allied Health Profession (AHP) students continue their learning to graduate and enter the workforce as planned. A creative approach to practice placements has been a positive of the pandemic for Healthcare Education. At Sheffield Hallam University an innovative, blended learning approach to placement within the education setting of the Allied Health department was introduced for Physiotherapy students. This presentation will discuss the innovation, its evaluation and findings and give recommendations for the use of a blended learning approach across Healthcare practice settings.

**Aim/focus of the innovation:** The practice placement involved BSc and MSc Pre-Registration Physiotherapy students. The placement had a teaching and learning focus - a new innovation for Physiotherapy practice placements in the UK. The aim was for students to meet the learning outcomes required for their level of practice placement. The placement had a blended learning approach with three aspects: Teaching on BSc Physiotherapy or Interprofessional modules; completion of an asynchronous online learning package giving them the underpinning theoretical knowledge of teaching and learning; and completion of a project with the aim of enhancing students' leadership skills.

**Implementation of the innovation:** The placement took place during a period of huge change in higher education institutions (HEIs) with the move to predominantly online learning. Staff anxieties around implementation of a new innovation were high. Students had fixed ideas around their perceived need for a traditional 'clinical placement'. Culture change needed to be managed prior to implementation to ensure a successful outcome and experience for both staff and students. The learning outcomes were mapped against the assessment criteria; the online asynchronous learning package was designed and ideas for possible projects for students were discussed. The timeframe for implementation was less than two weeks.

**Methods used to assess the innovation:** A small-scale qualitative evaluation of the innovative Physiotherapy placement model was undertaken following the placement. Two focus groups were conducted; one with staff and one with students, with the aim of understanding the thoughts and experiences of those involved in the placement. A semi-structured topic guide co-created with academic colleagues facilitated the focus group discussions. Data was transcribed and thematic analysis used to develop emerging themes. These themes were used to make recommendations for ongoing development of a blended learning approach to practice education and the shaping of a new culture.

**Key findings:** The initial findings show that the innovation was successful from both the student and staff perspectives. Key themes were the blended learning approach, transferable skills, application to clinical practice, and peer support. However, students identified a sense of “falling behind” with the acquisition of “clinical skills”. For future placements of this kind the importance of co-production of the blended learning approach in line with Jisc (2021) recommendations, as well as a culture shift relating to embedding the value of non-traditional placement models within Healthcare curricula were identified as essential.

**Three key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme:** A blended learning approach is recommended for future practice placement education in Healthcare. Practice placements which enhance transferable skills are hugely important for the future workforce and placements in an education setting could be included in all Healthcare programmes. Embedding the value of non-traditional placement models within the Healthcare curriculum requires a culture shift for HEIs, students and future employers.

**References:**

Joint Information Systems Council (2021). Student digital experience insights survey 2020/21: Findings from UK further education (pulse 1: October– December 2020) March 2021 Jisc data analytics.

**Keywords:** Blended Learning, Practice Placements, Education.

**2Aiii, 10:30 - 12:20, 1 September 2021**

**Innovation paper**

**A collaborative approach to blended learning in practice: Facilitating Public Health learning in a global pandemic**

Mary Clark and Pam Hodge, Middlesex University

**Promotional abstract:** The Promoting Health and Preventing Ill Health platform of the NMC standards of proficiencies highlights the Public Health role of the nurse (NMC, 2018b). Child Health student nurses in their first year spend time with the Health Visitors, this provides experience of Public Health strategies in action. During the pandemic it was not possible to facilitate a traditional student placement. A pilot digital practice-related workbook was developed with practice partners to support the integration of theoretical components of Public Health which were then applied in practice. This focused on the delivery of the healthy child programme’s 4-5-6 model (PHE, 2014).

**Background, context and evidence base for the innovation, including, where possible, its international relevance:** The Promoting Health and Preventing Ill Health platform of the NMC standards of proficiencies highlights the Public Health role of the nurse (NMC, 2018b). Child Health student nurses in their first year spend time with the Health Visitors, this provides experience of Public Health strategies in action. During the pandemic it was not possible to facilitate a traditional student placement. A pilot digital practice-related workbook was developed with practice partners to support the integration of theoretical components of Public Health which were then applied in practice. This focused on the delivery of the healthy child programme’s 4-5-6 model (PHE, 2014).

**Aim/focus of the innovation:** The aims of the project are:

- to ensure student nurse Public Health practice placements continued during the pandemic;
- to support integrated Public Health learning for students; and
- to explore how this innovation can support future practice learning.

**Implementation of the innovation:** Discussions with practice partners occurred between the Link Lecturer, the practice-based learning unit, and the health visiting team to decide how to facilitate a practice placement. It was agreed that a workbook to support the theoretical learning would enhance the reduced placement hours. This work was developed collaboratively and discussed with the practice team in advance of the first student attending. The Link Lecturer also met with the students in advance to explain the blended approach. Evaluations at the end of each placement were gained from both students and their Health Visitor Practice Assessors.

**Methods used to assess the innovation:** This work will be evaluated using an action research (Lewin, 1947) methodology, allowing iterative and dynamic changes for each cohort, based on the previous evaluations. All students undertaking this placement (n=9) and their Practice Assessors (n=6) from January - August 2021 will be invited to take part in the formal evaluation, consisting of both an evaluation form at the end of the placement and a focus group in June 2021. Analysis will be thematic and based upon Braun and Clarke's (2006) model.

**Key findings:** The student placements were able to continue using a blended practice learning approach offering enhanced Public Health learning opportunities. The project discovered a gap in the way students were previously supported to critique and reflect upon Public Health strategies in action whilst on placement. This work is transferable across fields: Some of this workbook was also adapted to use with all year 1 students (regardless of field) to introduce and integrate Public Health specifically into their practice learning. It is also now being adapted to enhance Public Health learning in general practice nurse placements.

**Three key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme:**

- Public Health specific blended learning in practice areas can support the platform 2 proficiencies required by the NMC (2018a).
- The established relationship between link lecturer and the health visiting team and collaborative working made this project possible.
- This work is transferable across different fields of practice.

**References:**

Braun, V. & Clarke, V. (2006) 'Using thematic analysis in psychology.' *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2). 77-101.

Lewin, K. (1947) 'Frontiers in group dynamics. II Channels of group life; social planning and action research.' *Human Relations*, 1947, 2., 143-153.

NMC (2018a) Part 3: Standards for pre-registration nursing programmes. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/globalassets/sitedocuments/standards-of-proficiency/standards-for-pre-registration-nursing-programmes/programme-standards-nursing.pdf> [Accessed 26/2/21].

NMC (2018b) Future nurse: Standards of proficiency for registered nurses.

NMC (2021) Current emergency and recovery programme standards. [Accessed 8/3/21].

PHE (2014) Supporting public health: children, young people and families. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/commissioning-of-public-health-services-for-children> [Accessed 26/2/21].

**Keywords:** Innovation, Public Health, Collaboration, Evidence-based, Practice-learning.

**2Aiv, 10:30 - 12:20, 1 September 2021**

**Innovation paper**

**International virtual exchange for student nurses and student midwives**

Dr Debra Morgan and Gill Smith, Northumbria University

**Promotional abstract:** Student exchange facilitates positive learning outcomes. However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic traditional student nurse and midwifery exchanges have not been possible. To support students to continue to undertake transcultural education and learning an alternative virtual exchange has been designed and undertaken. This virtual exchange comprises 60 students from 10 partner universities, representing five countries across the European Union (EU) and United States (US). This innovation offers opportunities for continuation in future years as either a blended activity or full alternative to traditional student nursing and midwifery exchange programmes. This paper will report on the design, implementation and evaluation of this virtual exchange innovation.

**Background, context and evidence base for the innovation, including, where possible, its international relevance:** Student nurse and midwifery exchange facilitates positive learning outcomes e.g. personal and professional growth, attainment of cultural learning outcomes and developing an understanding of global health (Ruddock & Turner, 2007; Keogh & Russel-Roberts, 2009; Maltby *et al.*, 2016; Morgan, 2018, 2019). However, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, these exchanges have not been possible. Underpinned by the evidence identifying the positives of traditional exchange, an alternative virtual exchange has been designed and undertaken in partnership with 10 EU and US universities. This six-week virtual exchange innovation comprises 60 student nurses and student midwives from these partners, representing five countries.

**Aim/focus of the innovation:** The aims of the virtual exchange mirror those of the standard student exchange. These are: for students to develop personally and professionally; to develop cultural competence; and to develop as global graduates and global citizens. A further aim is to evaluate the exchange to inform future deliveries and disseminate transferable knowledge to others. This is important as it is anticipated that virtual exchange will become commonplace as they support the widening participation agenda. For example, virtual exchange removes barriers to participation for students who are less financially supported or who have external commitments preventing traditional exchange.

**Implementation of the innovation:** The virtual exchange has been designed by two senior lecturers at Northumbria University. Design comprised development of learning outcomes, a transcultural learning guide, three seminars, design of transcultural peer groups and a Microsoft Teams site. It also included recruitment of international academic partners. Partners invited their students to participate and they support their students during the exchange and facilitate seminars. In their allocated transcultural peer group, students work virtually to learn about each other's countries and cultures. They also undertake a clinical case study to explore nursing and midwifery practice from a transcultural perspective. The virtual exchange runs for six weeks.

**Methods used to assess the innovation:** A mixed-methods research approach will be used to assess the innovation. Purposive sampling will be utilised. All Nursing and Midwifery students who have undertaken the exchange (N = 60), will be invited to participate in the study. Electronic questionnaires will be completed and online focus groups will be held. Focus groups will be hosted by each partner university with their own students, so there will be 10 focus groups. Descriptive statistical analysis will be used for the quantitative data generated and Morgan's method for thematic data analysis (2021) will be employed to analyse focus group data.

**Key findings:** This virtual exchange innovation offers an opportunity for universities worldwide to continue to support their students to develop transcultural learning outcomes despite travel limitations, and represents a new evidence-based transcultural educational approach to support Nursing and Midwifery students. It offers a sustainable approach to transcultural learning as travel is not required for students to develop a transcultural community of peers with whom they can learn about cultures and nursing and midwifery practices globally. It supports global widening participation and offers opportunities for students unable to participate in traditional exchange, e.g. due to financial barriers, caring commitments or disabilities.

**Three key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme:**

This virtual exchange innovation:

- offers an opportunity for universities worldwide to continue to support their students to develop transcultural learning outcomes despite travel limitations;
- represents a new evidence-based transcultural educational approach to support Nursing and Midwifery students;
- offers a sustainable approach to transcultural learning;
- supports global widening participation and offers opportunities for students unable to participate in traditional exchange.

**References:**

- Keogh, J. & Russel-Roberts, E. (2009) 'Exchange programmes and student mobility: Meeting students' expectations or an expensive holiday?' *Nurse Education Today*, 29(21), 108-16.
- Maltby, H.J., de Vries-Erich, J.M. & Lund, K. (2016) 'Being the stranger: Comparing study abroad experiences of nursing in low and high income countries through hermeneutic phenomenology', *Nurse Education Today*, 45, 114-119.
- Morgan, D.A. (2018) 'Learning in liminality: A hermeneutic phenomenological investigation of student nurse learning during a study abroad journey.' Doctoral thesis, University of Northumbria.
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- Morgan, D.A. (2021) 'Dealing with complexity: A modified approach to hermeneutical phenomenological data analysis.' *International Journal of Social Research Methodology*, in press & online. Available at: <https://t.co/DVIsrUQkVE>.
- Ruddock, H.C. & Turner, D.S. (2007) 'Developing cultural sensitivity: Nursing students' experiences of a study abroad programme', *Journal of Advanced Nursing*, 59 (4), 361-369.

**Keywords:** Virtual, Exchange, Mobility, Transcultural Education.

**2Av, 1 September 2021, 10:30 - 12:20**

**Poster+**

**Managing medical student surgical placements during COVID-19: An approach to consistently delivering excellent clinical education during a pandemic**

Dr, William Atkins, St. George's, University of London

**Promotional abstract:** COVID-19 meant that clinical placements were suspended or cancelled for Healthcare students across the UK during the first wave of the pandemic. Different strategies have since been implemented by higher education institutions to avoid further loss of learning opportunities in the 2020-21 academic year. We outline an approach taken towards introducing hybrid integrated learning in clinical placements at St George's University of London for students on their general surgical rotations, which has allowed us to consistently deliver high quality education and minimise the impact of COVID-19, despite widespread disruption to Healthcare delivery.

**Main focus/theme of, or issues addressed by, the poster:** Medical Education has faced widespread disruption during the pandemic. Surgery has been significantly impacted, with cancellation of elective surgery across the UK and with multiple surgical wards/theatres being converted to create capacity to care for patients with COVID-19. There have also been fewer face-to-face outpatient clinics with reduced patient numbers (British Medical Association, 2020), which would normally offer valuable educational opportunities. This presents a challenge for Medical students who need to obtain experience of surgery and meet focused learning objectives as part of their education.

**Research approaches and underlying evaluation:** In order to meet the challenges detailed above, a drastic restructuring of the students' placements was undertaken, and timetables based on hybrid learning were introduced. Time on site was reduced in order to manage student numbers in clinical environments. Interactive virtual sessions, including simulation, formed a significant proportion of scheduled teaching activities covering key surgical topics and procedures. Student feedback was monitored and showed consistently high student satisfaction scores. These were higher compared to averages from previous years, despite significant disruption and changes to their timetable. Virtual teaching was highlighted consistently as a positive aspect of the placements.

**Implications for healthcare education:** The blended timetable devised for students on their general surgical rotation at St George's University of London has led to increased student satisfaction, whilst still allowing students to meet their learning outcomes. Structured and interactive online teaching, which complements learning from clinical experiences, is likely to remain a significant component of teaching as higher education returns to normality after the pandemic. Understanding how this can be developed and enhanced will be of crucial significance to Healthcare educators in the future.

**References:**

British Medical Association 2020. The hidden impact of COVID-19 on patient care in the NHS in England.

**Keywords:** Surgery, Education, COVID-19, Hybrid, Virtual.