

## NET2021 Conference

### Live session full abstracts

#### Theme Session 2E

#### Key challenges in healthcare education

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

Research paper

**Nurse Academic identity: 'Complex hybrids' - a process of creative discovery through appreciative inquiry and visual methodologies**

Dr Clare Corness-Parr, Keele University

**Promotional abstract:** Appreciative Inquiry (AI) methodology (Cooperrider *et al.*, 2008) was used as an approach alongside theme boards as a visual research method, to generate data (Rose, 2014). Visual images depicting Nurse Academics' thoughts and ideas, assisted in exploring their identities. Findings included that Nurse Academics have a positive perspective of their identity, that it is derived from practice engagement in its many forms. Recommendations included: University managers and clinical practice should work closely to retain the intersection with the Clinical Practice Environment (CPE); Nurse Academics themselves need to assert opportunities to utilise their clinical, educational and research skills explicitly through career planning.

**Background, including underpinning literature and, wherever possible, the international relevance of the research:** Much of the previous national and international literature regarding Nurse Academics' contributions to the CPE has appeared to be quite negative and they have appeared stuck in a no-man's-land between the higher education institution (HEI) and the CPE. Alongside this, the literature indicates that Nurse Academic identities are complex, fluid and situational. Nurse Academic identities appear to have been shaped by a culture of subservience learnt from practice and reinforced by wider society. Appreciative inquiry was used to explore new perspectives framed in being 'possibility-centred' rather than 'problem-centred' to elicit new understandings.

**Aim(s) and/or research question(s)/research hypothesis(es):** The aim of this study was to develop practice guidance through exploring the identities of Nurse Academics and their contribution to the Clinical Practice Environment. The objectives were:

- To explore the nursing identities of a group of Nurse Academics who were engaged in an academic clinical practice team, from the perspectives of Nurse Academics and nurses in practice.
- To explore how Nurse Academics perceived their contributions to the CPE, from an emancipatory perspective.
- To understand how nurses in practice perceived the contributions of Nurse Academics, to the CPE.
- To elicit any enabling or blocking factors that were likely to impact on Nurse Academics' contributions to the clinical practice environment.

**Research methodology/research design, any ethical issues, and methods of data collection and analysis:** Appreciative inquiry methodology was used to explore Nurse Academic identities and the contribution that Nurse Academics could make to clinical practice. AI can be described as philosophy that incorporates a process to produce effective

positive change. AI focuses on empowerment and assumes that participants will respond positively to their inclusion in the process. Ethical approval was granted where the study was undertaken and from the Health Research Authority. Primary data was collected from Nurse Academics (N=10) and nurses in practice (N=6). Data collection methods included individual semi-structured interviews, focus groups and theme board technique. Data was analysed using thematic analysis.

**Key findings and recommendations:** Findings indicated that Nurse Academic identities were derived from CPE engagement. Nurses in practice see education as an intrinsic element of being a nurse and therefore feel affiliated to the higher education institution. Nurse Academics had positive identities within the HEI and CPE, viewing themselves as 'complex hybrids'. Contested areas included logistical constraints, competing demands and 'Queen Mother' visits to practice (lacking purpose). Recommendations included:

- Nurse Academics' contributions should be conceptualised flexibly, to optimise skillsets to best advantage the CPE. E.g. honorary contracts, teaching in the CPE, supporting Registered Nurses.
- Opportunities for collaborations between Nurse Academics and nurses with their development, writing CPE policies, participating in strategic level meetings within organisations, research projects or publishing.
- Nurse Academic roles need further support at strategic levels within the HEI. Investment is required to identify and facilitate constructive use of time in CPE activities and profiling the CPE contributions within job descriptions for Nurse Academics to use their time creatively to support practice.
- Collaborative opportunities need to be visionary at senior levels between the HEI and CPE. This is a critical 'window of opportunity' for senior managers, so Nurse Academics' contributions to the CPE can be mutually beneficial.

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

- This research presents a differing perspective on Nurse Academic identities, showing they are established in the HEI setting and can make meaningful contributions to the CPE using their academic repertoire.
- Recommendations include that senior managers in HEIs and the CPE should work more closely to retain the highly prized intersection with the CPE.
- It is important for Nurse Academics to define their identity, when considering their transition into the HEI.
- Nurse Academics themselves need to be supported to assert opportunities to utilise their clinical, educational and research skills explicitly through career planning to draw on their expertise.

#### **References:**

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**Keywords:** Nurse Academic, Identity, Appreciative Inquiry.

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

**Innovation paper**

**Using virtual spaces to enhance peer learning and develop a community of practice**

Mel Lindley and Ross Mallett, Sheffield Hallam University

**Promotional abstract:** This session will outline how virtual spaces have been used across a range of programmes (undergraduate Interprofessional Education, Pre-Registration Masters, Degree Apprenticeships and postgraduate Advanced Practice) to facilitate student collaboration outside the classroom, enhance interactivity and develop a community of practice. It will demonstrate the approach taken and technologies utilised. Outputs of this approach, including analytics, feedback from students and staff perceptions, will be shared; as well as lessons learned. Recommendations for effective implementation and optimisation of student engagement will be discussed, with consideration for infrastructure and resourcing constraints in the current higher education context.

**Background, context and evidence base for the innovation, including, where possible, its international relevance:** Optimising students' experience through innovative and dynamic teaching approaches, the utilisation of appropriate learning technologies, feedback and developing a sense of belonging are core to engaging students (Taylor & Robinson, 2012). Creating a sense of belonging, identity and connectedness are integral in developing learning communities; with lack of social integration and a sense of attachment to an institution known to contribute to student attrition (Berryman & Eley, 2019; Kane *et al.*, 2014; Masika & Jones, 2016). Maintaining a community of practice through virtual space use requires additional consideration. System usability, tutor presence and activity, as well as the need for academic content, not just social interaction, contribute to the persistence of users in virtual communities (Laux, Luse & Mennecke, 2016).

**Aim/focus of the innovation:** To improve the student experience during periods when students were off campus and/or in the workplace, online communities were established for a range of undergraduate and postgraduate programmes within the College of Health, Wellbeing and Life Sciences at Sheffield Hallam University. The overarching aim of these communities was to support student induction, transition and belonging; and develop vibrant learning communities of practice. Their purpose ranged from providing early access prior to enrolment, sharing course information and opportunities for introductions, to facilitating peer learning, sharing academic content, providing opportunities for discussion and a space for collaboration and feedback.

**Implementation of the innovation:** Staff were provided with support and guidance in the planning and implementation stages to ensure due consideration was given to the use of virtual spaces relevant to the learning aims of the programme of study. Digital capability training was also delivered to ensure staff confidence and familiarity with the learning technologies. The virtual communities were introduced to students highlighting their integral

nature to the programme of study. Students were asked to discuss and agree engagement and ground rules. They also received in-class support and resources to ensure access to and understanding of its full functionality.

**Methods used to assess the innovation:** Several methods were utilised to evaluate different perspectives and metrics for the innovation. Efficacy of the communities was undertaken in the form of digital site analytics including monitoring of numbers of active users, posts and comments by staff and students. Student feedback was captured through informal dialogue, structured focus groups and completion of questionnaires. Staff perspectives were gathered through requests for feedback and the sharing of experiences.

**Key findings:** Early access to virtual communities prior to enrolment was positively reported; especially by international students who were unsure of what to expect and others unable attend the initial course induction. A high level of student engagement across postgraduate advanced practice modules was demonstrated, irrespective of tutor activity. The use of virtual spaces in standalone undergraduate and/or interprofessional modules, however, was generally less successful and dependent on a high academic staff presence. Analysis has resulted in the development of recommendations and practice guidelines relative to context; incorporating factors such as staff development needs, engagement, system usability, infrastructure and resourcing.

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

- Innovative use of blended learning and social media can develop a community of practice.
- It can provide effective facilitation of learning for Pre- and Post-Registration Health and Social Care students.
- Enhancement of interactivity, collaboration and peer-learning goes beyond the classroom.

**References:**

Berryman, M. & Eley, E. (2019) 'Student belonging: critical relationships and responsibilities.', *International Journal of Inclusive Education*, 23(9) 985-1001.

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Laux, D., Luse, A. & Mennecke, B.E. (2016) 'Collaboration, connectedness, and community: An examination of the factors influencing student persistence in virtual communities.' *Computers in Human Behaviour*, 57, 4652-464.

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**Keywords:** Virtual Spaces, Community of Practice, Sense of Belonging, Engagement, Peer-learning.

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

Research paper

## Journey Women: The development of identity in Midwives

Suzanne Crozier, Edinburgh Napier

**Promotional abstract:** This paper presents the findings from a doctoral study which used Narrative Inquiry to explore the development of professional identity in midwives. The exploration is important because there is concern about the retention of midwives within the workforce. I will present the findings which will illustrate that becoming a midwife is more than possessing a set of skills and behaviours. Upon graduation midwives must establish an identity as both a professional and an employee when entering the workforce. The journey to becoming a midwife will be illustrated via the stories of five midwives who participated in the study.

**Background, including underpinning literature and, wherever possible, the international relevance of the research:** The successful employment of midwives is fundamental to the delivery of the Government's ambitions for the maternity services in England and is also a global concern to meet the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals. Within the UK, the response to workforce concerns has been to increase student numbers and while there has been consideration of the needs of newly qualified midwives this has tended to focus on skills and personal attributes (Jones *et al.*, 2015). The work of Holmes (2013, 2015) presents the development of identity as key to sustained employability and this has informed the rationale for the study.

**Aim(s) and/or research question(s)/research hypothesis(es):** The study is being carried out as part of the requirements for a Doctorate in Business Administration. The aim of the study is to explore the development of identity in midwives within the context of employability. The objectives are:

1. Review of the literature to analyse how employability is conceptualised in Midwifery.
2. Carry out a Narrative Inquiry to analyse and represent the stories told by midwives about their experiences of becoming a midwife to understand the development of professional and organisational identity.
3. Discuss the implications of the inquiry for the practice for those who educate and employ midwives.

**Research methodology/research design, any ethical issues, and methods of data collection and analysis:** A narrative inquiry approach was used to capture the stories told by midwives about their experiences of becoming a midwife. Narrative inquiry seeks to both understand and then present the world of the participants through their stories and enabled exploration of the processes by which the midwives developed an identity as a midwife (Clandinin & Connelly, 2000; Wang & Geale, 2015). A purposive sample was drawn from midwives who graduated between 2017-2019 and data were analysed to highlight the themes and stories which illustrate the journey to becoming a midwife (Reissman, 2008).

**Key findings and recommendations:** Data collection was completed in January 2021 and analysis has commenced considering two 'restorying' approaches (Ollerenshaw & Creswell, 2002). Following the story that each participant constructed about how they became a midwife, it is possible to identify a plot, setting, characters, problem and resolution. The plot reflects the experience-driven nature of a desire to help other women that motivates individuals to become midwives and the initial problems faced as a student which were resolved via the relationships that the midwives had with the women in their care. Further problems are faced as a new registrant/employee trying to manage the conflicting priorities of caring for women and meeting organisational demands. A key character in this dilemma is 'the band 7' but so too are the peer groups that the midwives developed as a student. All the stories include a significant crisis related to decision making and the resolution and end point

varied depending on the actions of the other characters involved. Further reflexive work is ongoing to refine these stories including by sharing the 're-story' with the participants. At this stage, recommendations may include using the stories as a learning tool for final year students.

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

- Healthcare Education can benefit from considering the wider body of literature on graduate employability when evaluating the impact of education programmes on preparing students for the reality of employment once registered.
- The development of professional identity needs to be considered alongside an organisational identity as a placed student/employee.
- Re-storied narratives formed in the early years of practice can form a useful learning tool for student healthcare practitioners and those who employ them.

**References:**

Clandinin, D.J. & Connelly, F.M. (2000) *Narrative Inquiry: experience and story in qualitative research*. San Francisco: Jossey Bass.

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**Keywords:** Midwives, Narrative Inquiry, Professional Identity, Organisational Identity.

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

**Poster+**

**The lived experiences of newly appointed HCAs: The ward as a community of practice**

Dr Rosemary Webster, University Hospitals of Leicester

**Promotional abstract:** This presentation highlights the impact of the clinical environment as a place of support for learning and development for Health Care Assistants (HCAs). This doctoral research used a phenomenological approach to explore the lived experience of 12 HCAs at 3-4 weeks and six months into their role. The analysis highlighted the impact of the clinical environment; with being part of an induction cohort and classroom learning seeming to have limited relevance. The findings point to the ward as a Community of Practice (Andrew *et al.*, 2008) and suggest ways to optimise the impact of the clinical workplace.

**Main focus/theme of, or issues addressed by, the poster:** This doctoral research is unique in that it is a UK study involving Health Care Assistants newly employed in an acute hospital setting. It resonates with the current focus on the development of the non-registered nursing workforce who have historically had an unstructured and somewhat ad hoc induction

to their role. The findings suggest ways in which traditional approaches to nurse induction can be adapted for this group of staff.

**Research approaches and underlying evaluation:** The study used a phenomenological hermeneutic approach to explore the lived experience of 12 HCAs. In depth, semi-structured interviews were carried out at 3-4 weeks and again at six months into their role. The interviews were analysed separately and then reviewed as a whole using an approach informed by van Manen. The findings informed the development of a conceptual framework for the lived experience of HCAs that illustrates how their experience straddles theories of transition in nursing and theories developed through the study of apprenticeship, in particular Newcomer Adjustment and Legitimate Peripheral Participation (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

**Implications for healthcare education:** Two key themes of 'Belonging to their role' and 'Belonging to their ward' were identified as significant with sub themes indicating a strong sense of positivity and an intrinsic view of themselves as carers wanting to progress. The importance of the ward sister role, effective mentoring, the opportunity for individualised facilitated learning in practice and the significance of adequate preparation and targeted support in the first few days in the role were practical suggestions to come from the HCAs' lived experiences.

**References:**

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Van Manen, M. (2014) *Phenomenology of practice: Meaning- Giving methods in phenomenological research and writing*. Left Coast Press, Walnut Creek CA.

**Keywords:** Health Care Assistants, Induction, Early Support, Phenomenology, Belonging, Community of Practice.