NET2021 Conference

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Theme Session 4A
Learning, teaching and assessment strategies

4Ai, 2 September 2021, 07:00 - 08:20
Innovation Paper
Implementing assessment for learning using a whole programme approach
Andrea Cockett, Kings College London

Promotional abstract: This paper presents a project designed to implement assessment for learning across all of the Pre-Registration Nursing and Midwifery programmes in one Faculty. The project identified programme and module level student activities that were designed to embed assessment for learning and develop students' agency in relation to assessment and feedback.

Background, context and evidence base for the innovation, including, where possible, its international relevance: Current literature suggests that assessment is the most powerful influence on student learning and should therefore be a central feature of curriculum design (Carless, 2015; Medland, 2016). Assessment for learning is an approach in which assessment is seen as being central to the learning process for students and should be a powerful tool in the development of not only substantive knowledge but other cognitive skills such as self-regulation (Carless, 2015). This innovation involved the implementation of an assessment for learning approach to all Pre-Registration programmes in a Nursing and Midwifery faculty.

Aim/focus of the innovation: The focus of this innovation was to embed assessment for learning activities for students at programme and modular level. The activities were designed to develop evaluative judgement (Ajjawi *et al*., 2018) and feedback literacy (Carless & Boud, 2018). Activities were supported by an extensive range of staff development workshops and quality assurance processes. Individual programme implementation and evaluation plans were developed collaboratively by programme teams.

Implementation of the innovation: The innovation was implemented over one academic year and was started with the launch of a new assessment strategy. Initially the focus was on staff development activities and the development of individual programme implementation plans. Student activities were threaded throughout the programmes and were timed to correspond with assessment periods and when feedback was being received by students. Quality assurance processes included a review of assessment organisation and management for selected modules and student feedback.

Methods used to assess the innovation: The innovation was assessed using several processes:

- Quality assurance activities including a comprehensive review of the organisation and management of assessment at a module level.
- Student feedback for the activities they were involved in.

- Staff feedback about the staff development activities.

Key findings: Implementing assessment for learning across a range of programmes with large student numbers requires a comprehensive and detailed plan. Taking a programme-level approach allowed students to be exposed to activities that would develop their agentic engagement with assessment and feedback over a prolonged period, so building on and developing their academic literacy. Staff development activities were fundamental in developing staff engagement and interest in the innovation and the quality assurance processes allowed feedback to be gathered that then supported further implementation activities.

Three key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme: This innovation demonstrates how assessment for learning can be successfully embedded at a programme level within a faculty with a large and diverse student population. Student agentic engagement with assessment and feedback was fostered by a range of programme and module-level activities that provided a range of skill development. This enabled them to develop both their skills in evaluative judgement and feedback literacy. Discussing these activities and how they were designed and implemented contributes to the understanding of how student academic literacy can be supported and developed.

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Ajjawi, R., Tai, J., Dawson, P. & Boud, D. (2018) 'Conceptualising evaluative judgement for sustainable assessment in higher education', in Boud, D., Ajjawi, R., Dawson, P. & Tai, J. (eds.) *Developing Evaluative Judgement in Higher Education.* Abingdon: Routledge.

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Keywords: Assessment for Learning, Student Agency.

4Aii, 2 September 2021, 07:00 - 08:20
Research Paper
Nursing students' perceptions of the taught content of programmes of study

Andrea Cockett, Kings College London

Promotional abstract: This research paper explores how Nursing students describe and discuss the content of modules within a Pre-Registration programme. Students identified content as either 'science', perceived to be useful and applicable and 'theory' which was perceived as being of little immediate value to them. Students valued content that had immediacy for their ability to operate within the clinical practice arena.

Background, including underpinning literature and, wherever possible, the international relevance of the research: Nursing programmes of study aim to include both theory and practice knowledge by the combination of theory-led teaching which forefronts practice and the opportunity to experience practice during clinical placements (NMC, 2018). This locating of Nursing between practice and an academic discipline (Hoeck & Delmar, 2018) can cause challenges with the identification of what constitutes Nursing knowledge

(Barrett, 2017). Some have positioned Nursing as a STEM discipline (Davison, 2019) whist others recognise the artistry involved in Nursing (Bender, 2018). Understanding how students perceive Nursing knowledge could help universities in curriculum development and the development of learning activities.

Aim(s) and/or research question(s)/research hypothesis(es): The aim of the study being presented was to understand how Nursing students perceived assessment in their programme. The data, however, uncovered another perspective: the students' perceptions of Nursing knowledge and how they characterised it. This was an unexpected additional finding from the study and provides and interesting perspective for educators.

Research methodology/research design, any ethical issues, and methods of data collection and analysis: A narrative inquiry approach to data collection and analysis was used locating the study within a social constructivist paradigm. Seven final year undergraduate Nursing students were interviewed and their experiences and perceptions of both Nursing and assessment were recorded. Narrative accounts were prepared which were then analysed using reflexive thematic analysis. Ethical approval was granted by the author's institution. The study was framed theoretically by Bourdieu's concepts of habitus, capital and field. These were chosen as they provided recognition that the participants experienced their programme in different contexts, different settings and with different social and educational histories influencing their understandings

Key findings and recommendations: Nursing knowledge was characterised by participants as being either 'science', identified as immediately applicable to their clinical practice or 'theory' which was not. They identified clear differences in the way they perceived the content of the programme and the ascribed value of it to their knowledge as a nurse. Science-based subjects such as Biology, Pharmacology and Pathophysiology were perceived to be of more value to them than the content that was related to sociology or policy. These latter topics were described as being 'theory.' This has implications for the way that programme content is framed for students to ensure it is perceived as relevant.

Three key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme: Much has been written about conceptions of Nursing knowledge with the debates continuing in the literature over a prolonged period of time (Bender, 2018). Little has been written about Nursing students' perceptions of it and this study contributes a perspective that is usually hidden. The students in this study had perceptions of Nursing knowledge that are important for the organisation and presentation of concepts in programmes of study to ensure that they perceive and understand their importance to their practice as a nurse.

References:

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Davison, P. (2019) 'Is nursing a STEM discipline - does it matter and what can we do about it?' *Journal of Advanced Nursing,* 76(1), 1-3. Available at: https://doi.org/10.1111/jan.14212.

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Keywords: Nursing, Knowledge, Students, Perceptions.

4Aiii, 2 September 2021, 07:00 - 08:20
Innovation Paper
Where did the interprofessional curriculum go? Revisiting and contextualisation
Dr Susan Shaw, Dr Denise Atkins and Sue Walke, Auckland University of Technology

Promotional abstract: This paper presents an analysis of the curricula changes over the last 20 years and notes themes such as the reasons disciplines gave for 'migrating' out of shared learning opportunities. It also outlines an initiative to refresh the interprofessional vision with a particular focus on contextualising shared learning to assist students to navigate their areas of interest. Pedagogical, organisational issues are considered along with the cultures of clinical disciplines and how they position themselves in relation to interprofessional learning and practice.

Background, context and evidence base for the innovation, including, where possible, its international relevance: Almost 20 years ago an interprofessional curriculum structure was implemented across a large faculty delivering Health Professional Education to many disciplines, approximately a dozen of which equip graduates to be registered health professionals. This development was driven by a commitment to the international interest in interprofessional learning and practice but, unlike other nations, the implementation was organic within existing structures and business as usual. The challenges of such developments are well documented and include tensions between shared/generic and discipline-specific learning (Dunston *et al*., 2019) where to locate the shared learning (Meleis, 2016), and addressing the needs of students to identify with their chosen field of practice (Morgan, 2017).

Aim/focus of the innovation: This paper presents an analysis of the curricula changes over the last 20 years and notes the themes such as the reasons disciplines gave for 'migrating' out of shared learning opportunities. It also outlines an initiative to refresh the interprofessional vision with a particular focus on contextualising shared learning to assist students to navigate their areas of interest. Pedagogical, organisational issues are considered along with the cultures of clinical disciplines and how they position themselves in relation to interprofessional learning and practice.

Implementation of the innovation: Following the analysis a faculty-wide process of contextualising the curriculum was undertaken.

Methods used to assess the innovation: Changes made to curricula including regulations, learning outcomes, content and assessment were analysed to indicate the extent to which the contextualisation project had addressed issues.

Key findings: That clinical courses of study have a tendency to 'pull back' from interprofessional and shared learning opportunities and attention must be paid to ensure learning and assessment are contextualised.

Three key points to indicate how your work contributes to knowledge development within the selected theme: Focusing on the learning journey of students should be a priority when considering the relevance of curricula. Designing content and assessment to ensure that students across disciplines can engage meaningfully is good practice. Educators need support to ensure learning is facilitated in ways that articulate with discipline teams.

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Dunston, R., Forman, D., Thistlethwaite, J., Steketee, C., Rogers, G.D. & Moran, M. (2019) 'Repositioning interprofessional education from the margins to the centre of Australian health professional education - what is required?' *Australian Health Review*, 43(2), 224-229.

Meleis, A.I. (2016) 'Interprofessional education: a summary of reports and barriers to recommendations'. *Journal of Nursing Scholarship*, 48(1), 106-112.

Morgan, C.J. (2017) 'Graduates' development of interprofessional practice capability during their early socialisation into professional roles'. *Journal of Interprofessional Care*, 31(4), 438-445.

Keywords: Curriculum Design, Interprofessional Learning, Contextualisation.

4Aiv, 2 September 2021, 07:00 - 08:20
Poster+
An independent study option: Developing autonomous practitioners in an undergraduate Diagnostic Radiography programme
Vicky Hughes, University of Liverpool

Promotional abstract: Independent learning, linking theory to practice, and authentic assessment are concepts applicable to all Healthcare Education settings. This session describes an 'Independent Study Option' introduced to the undergraduate Diagnostic Radiography programme at the University of Liverpool, which incorporates these factors. Students research a specialist imaging modality of their choice, within the context of a specific medical condition, increasing both autonomy and motivation, and enabling a direct link between theory and practice. Clinical placement days enable exploration of holistic concepts including patient care, and multi-disciplinary team involvement in decision making, increasing authenticity of assessment. Verbal presentation of findings develops communication skills.

Main focus/theme of, or issues addressed by, the poster: Integration of theory and practice, while developing autonomous practitioners, who are effective communicators, are essential in Healthcare Education (HCPC, 2017). A new 'Independent Study Option' within our undergraduate Diagnostic Radiography programme, incorporates these elements. Students select an imaging modality of interest (potentially linked with career aspirations), then evaluate its use in diagnosis of a chosen medical condition. This independence enhances motivation, and clinical placements enable direct links with practice. Assessment is via assignment and verbal presentation, developing communication skills. Peer seminars provide social constructivism (Elshami *et al*., 2020) and formative feedback, minimising disadvantages of independent learning (Sheakley *et al*., 2019).

Research approaches and underlying evaluation: The module will complete its first iteration in May 2021, when initial evaluation will be undertaken via the standard university module evaluation survey. Further to this, focus groups will be undertaken with students, and with academic and clinical supervisors, to explore perceptions in more depth. Areas for feedback will include module structure, guidance provided by academic staff, clarity of assignment guidelines, support for presentation skills, and the timing and value of the clinical placement days (implemented during the COVID-19 pandemic). This will both inform adaptations for future module delivery, and also identify any potential impact on students' future career preference.

Implications for healthcare education: The importance of independent learning is emphasised in healthcare programmes internationally (Moghadari-Koosha *et al*., 2020; Gqweta, 2012; Cadorin, *et al*., 2012; Linaker, 2015; Naeger *et al*., 2014; Sheakley, *et al*., 2019; Spence, 2019), with peer learning a useful support mechanism (Ellshami *et al*., 2020). Additionally, the UK has seen increasing emphasis on student training within specialist imaging modalities, with rapidly increasing demand (NHS, 2019; Sloane & Hyde, 2019). This module is innovative in initiating student-directed active learning, enhancing motivation to learn (Knowles, 1984), with peer and supervisor support. Direct clinical relevance, and communication skills development add authenticity to assessment.

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Keywords: Independence, Autonomy, Motivation, Communication, Authenticity.