

## NET2021 Conference

### Live session full abstracts

#### Theme Session 6B

### Student experience, engagement and achievement

6Bi, 14:00 - 15:20, 2 September 2021

Innovation paper

**Caring for Carers**

Leanne Mchugh, Bishop Grossetetse University

**Promotional abstract:** This session will explore the unpredictability of being a carer while studying at university, gaining knowledge by engaging with students and hearing their unique experiences. The working party have specifically concentrated on inclusivity of our student carers, mapping the student support that is available within the University and increasing awareness of this. The project has also incorporated student wellbeing; and retention through development of additional resources and gaining the Care Quality Award.

**Background, context and evidence base for the innovation, including, where possible, its international relevance:** In Lincolnshire it is estimated there are 84,000 unpaid family carers (Buckner & Yeandle, 2015). Within the University, exact figures were unknown, but gaining the Care Quality Award, having a year plan on a continuum, was the key to embed innovations. Inclusivity in Health and Social Care Education and the wider University curriculum is at the heart of our project. Through open conversations with our students we gained further knowledge around the unpredictability of being a carer. Themes we wanted to review were: How can we best support our student carers and ensure equity in all our learning and teaching?

**Aim/focus of the innovation:** The overall project aim was the development of a carers network that would be adaptable and changeable as students came forwards and identified their needs. The innovations included: carers' cafés, BBQ, picnics, working parties, market places, funflip, designing the carers' passport, carers' pin badges and in-house learning over lunch sessions. We realised the reach was increasing all the time with new carers self-identifying as they reported feeling reassured that the University was committed and listening. Feedback from one student said "the café was great, making meaningful connections with staff and student carers, I feel supported".

**Implementation of the innovation:** Through evidencing our journey towards the award, we have successfully demonstrated our commitment to student carers on a continuum. We have been clear that the award was not the end but only the beginning. Some innovation projects have been a partnership with students and various departments and staff. Some have been specifically led and designed by the students such as a carers' pin badge. Listening to the students' voices was key to this as they are the carers and they know what they require, such as what visual representation they wanted to adopt.

**Methods used to assess the innovation:** In January 2020 our efforts were recognised as we were successful with our application for "The Carers Charter Quality Award"- 'You Care – We Care' ensures that the profile of unpaid carers within the University was raised and the invaluable and essential contribution they make is recognised, enabling carers to live fulfilling lives combined with their caring roles. Through evidencing our journey towards this

award we have developed resources and now have a student welcome pack. We are currently working towards writing an evaluation of the project with our students leading this piece of work as it is their story.

**Key findings:** Strengthening the integrated student support services alongside teaching practice we recognise this was essentially already in place but this was strengthened by the "Carers Passport". An overview: The first section was the students' story - we listened to our students repeating their story of how being a carer was affecting their learning; Section 2 - student advice supported the creation of a study support plan; and Section 3 was for placements. This simple solution ensured that students were able to share their story in a safe way that did not take time away from mainstream support but still offer targeted support.

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

- Being a student carer is unpredictable - the electronic passport can be updated regularly to mirror this.
- Peer support for the student carers was voiced as a valuable outcome with clear identification this was not to be separate from staff - The carers' café has brought together students and staff as a collective to share their stories.
- Identifying carers within the university who were unaware that they are carers was our most successful area.

**References:**

Buckner, L. & Yeandle, S. (2015). Valuing Carers 2015: The rising value of carers' support. Carers UK. Available at: <https://www.carersuk.org/for-professionals/policy/policy-library/valuing-carers-2015>.

**Keywords:** Carers, Students, Unpredictability, Engagement, Innovation.

**6Bii, 14:00 - 15:20, 2 September 2021**

**Research paper**

**Standing Out and Fitting in: Being a male student in Nursing, Social Work and Primary Education**

Dr Sue Jackson, Northumbria University and Dr Andrew Melling, University of Central Lancashire

**Promotional abstract:** At our institution, only a small percentage of students on Nursing, Social Work and Education programmes are male and most, but not all, report lower satisfaction rates than female counterparts. Using a mixed-methods approach, this study explores male students' experiences and factors which impact on their career choice and satisfaction as a student. Initial analysis of data suggests placements, age of students, nurturing activities and peer support are all key factors in satisfaction and social isolation. Appropriate role models, support networks and specific tuition for male students on these programmes may solve some of the challenges.

**Background, including underpinning literature and, wherever possible, the international relevance of the research:** Men are underrepresented in Nursing, Social Work and Education professions in many parts of the world. In the UK they make up 11% of Nurses (NHS, 2019), 18% of Social Workers (Skills for Care, 2017); and 15% of Primary Education Teachers (TES, 2019). At our University, recruitment of males to these programmes is below the UK average. In some programmes there are only one or two males

in a class of thirty. These students report lower satisfaction ratings, in particular they rate teaching, support and their ability to be heard lower than the females on the same programmes.

**Aim(s) and/or research question(s)/research hypothesis(es):** Male students on our Health programmes may feel isolated, lack support and role models leading to lower satisfaction. However, males on our Primary Education Programme report high levels of satisfaction despite being a minority group. This conflicting data is worthy of investigation. This cross-departmental investigation aimed to:

- Understand male students' experience of Education programmes.
- Ensure that the 'right' sort of support is tailored specifically to the needs of this student group.
- Improve male student satisfaction and reduce attrition.
- Identify potential barriers to recruitment and develop solutions.
- Highlight any areas of good practice.

**Research methodology/research design, any ethical issues, and methods of data collection and analysis:** This study was informed by a mixed-methodological design involving two distinct phases:

PHASE 1: A detailed exploration of the relevant metrics to develop a clear picture of all the programmes under investigation. The relationship between gender, recruitment and satisfaction were explored, and compare to regional and national data.

PHASE 2: A phenomenological approach was utilised to explore male students' views and feelings regarding their education experience. Four (profession specific) focus groups were facilitated by male members of the research group (AM, DL). Each focus group lasted 1- 1.5 hours, were digitally recorded and transcribed verbatim.

**Key findings and recommendations:**

Key Findings: So far 21 male students from the three programmes have participated. An initial thematic exploration of data reveals emerging themes. Exposure to positive male role models influenced many students to choose their profession. During the programme students felt particularly isolated in placements. In these settings they were often stereotyped and given 'male' tasks and activities. At times, they felt they had to behave differently to their female colleagues in and around vulnerable individuals. This, in itself was not viewed as a problem, but this was never overtly discussed with tutors and they received no instruction or support about this. In the classroom, most Primary Education students had 3/4 male peers for support, this was not reflected in Nursing or Social Work. Mature students who had developed resilience and had established support networks away from the University appeared to be better prepared for the social isolation that they faced in the classroom and on placements.

Recommendations: Deliberately placing males together in tutor groups, providing specific support and networking opportunities for young men and helping all male students to develop coping skills and resilience associated with caring activity may have the potential to improve student satisfaction and reduce social isolation.

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

- This research illustrates that exposure to positive male role models in the media and in work-based settings during formative years may increase the number of applications to traditional female professional programmes.
- Ensuring that there are peers and gender-specific support networks may enhance male student satisfaction in these programmes.
- Further exploration and study is needed to explore, define and develop coping mechanisms in male students and provide support for intimate caring activities and situations with vulnerable individuals.

#### References:

NHS England (2019) 'Young male nursing applicants surge after 'We are the NHS' recruitment campaign.' [Online] Available at: <https://www.england.nhs.uk/2019/02/young-male-nursing-applicants-surge-after-we-are-the-nhs-recruitment-campaign/>

NMC (2019) Registration data reports. NMC. Available at: <https://www.nmc.org.uk/about-us/reports-and-accounts/registration-statistics/>.

Skills for Care (2017) What do we know about men working in social care? Available at: <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/About/Blog/Article/What-do-we-know-about-men-working-in-social-care.aspx>.

TES (2019) 'Untangling the myth of men in primary schools.' [Online] Available at: <https://www.tes.com/institute/blog/article/untangling-myth-men-primary-schools>.

**Keywords:** Male Students, Minority Groups, Social Isolation, Role Models, Support.

**6Biii, 2 September 2021, 14:00 - 15:20**

#### Poster+

### Developing culturally competent Nurse Education through increased self-awareness around unconscious bias amongst Nurse Educators

Dr Gayatri Nambiar-Greenwood, Manchester Metropolitan University

**Promotional abstract:** Nurse Educators play an important role in supporting students to develop their capability as culturally competent practitioners, a responsibility which requires awareness of their own cultural values and beliefs (Farber, 2019). This poster reports a small-scale, hermeneutic study, engaging Nurse Educators in initiatives designed to provoke the exploration of factors which influence how we 'see' our own, and other, cultures and how we communicate these to others. Participants valued this opportunity to review use of language across the Nursing curriculum, which is aware of unconscious bias and ethnocentricity.

**Main focus/theme of, or issues addressed by, the poster:** The poster explores initiatives to support the development of culturally competent Nurse Education. At a time where dialogues surrounding culture within politics and the mass media are strongly influencing how society perceive themselves and others (Ademola & Okunola, 2013; Hortsi *et al.*, 2014), and it is inevitable that it will also affect the way nurses and Nurse Educators, as members of society, perceive the rhetoric on the subjects of culture, multiculturalism and immigration. Research by nursing theorists (Papadopoulos, 2011) and cross-cultural psychology (Ting-Toomey, 2012; Wrench *et al.*, 2006) suggests that we can only develop our ability to be culturally competent through an exploration of ethnocentricities and unconscious bias, which this study addresses.

**Research approaches and underlying evaluation:** Sixteen participants completed workshops around unconscious bias, origins of ethnocentricity, the cultural 'other', the challenges of intercultural communication apprehension, and a wider philosophy of culture beyond race, ethnicity and religion, over one day. Seven participants completed semi structured interviews after the event to explore their learning from the project. A hermeneutic approach was taken as we were aware that the responses were not just dependant on the sensitive subject that we chose to tackle, but also to us, the researchers. All seven interviewees felt that the project had led to a re-thinking about language used when teaching. Two participants felt the workshop should be mandatory within higher education and clinical practice.

**Implications for healthcare education:** Nurse Educators have a responsibility to act as role models to future nurses and to develop curricula that are culturally competent. This project demonstrates some value in the delivery of specific initiatives which support nurse educators to identify their own cultural values, their understanding of others and to deconstruct their unconscious bias which may negatively influence their teaching.

#### **References:**

Ademola, E.O. & Okunola, R.A. (2013) 'Peoples, culture and mass media as agent of cultural imperialism.' *Covenant University Journal of Politics and International Affairs*, 1(2), 179-191.

Farber, J.E. (2019) 'Cultural competence of baccalaureate nurse faculty: relationship to cultural experiences.' *Journal of professional Nursing*, 35(2), 81-88

Horsti, K., Titley, G. & Hulten, G. (2014) *National conversations: Public service media and cultural diversity in Europe*. Bristol: Intellect Books.

Papadopoulos, I. (2011) 'Courage, compassion and cultural competence.' In The 13th Anna Reynvaan Lecture, 19th May 2011, Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Ting-Toomey, S. (2012) *Communicating across cultures*. London: Guilford Press.

Wrench, J.S., Corrigan, M.W., McCroskey, J.M. & Punyanunt-Carter, N.M. (2006) 'Religious fundamentalism and intercultural communication: The relationships among ethnocentrism, intercultural communication apprehension, religious fundamentalism, homonegativity, and tolerance for religious disagreements.' *Journal of Intercultural Communication Research*, 35(1), 23-44.

**Keywords:** Unconscious Bias, Nurse Educator, Nursing Curricula.

**6Biv, 2 September 2021, 14:00 - 15:20**

#### **Poster+**

#### **Providing a safe space and support for minoritised Healthcare students**

Ifrah Salih and Shirley Masterson-Ng, Sheffield Hallam University

**Promotional abstract:** The College of Health Wellbeing and Life Sciences (HWLS) at Sheffield Hallam University has successfully implemented minoritised students network groups across Nursing and Midwifery (N&M) and Allied Health Professions (AHP) where students and staff meet to share experiences, support students from racially minoritised communities and learn to be active allies.

**Main focus/theme of, or issues addressed by, the poster:** In order for students to make the best choices possible, they need access to advice and guidance (GOV, 2020). Higham *et al.* (2015) and Thomas (2012) also express that one key factor around successful

engagement is for students to feel a sense of belonging, which will in turn increase their confidence. These groups provide a safe space for staff and students to do this. Workshops are used to raise awareness of the issues minoritised students face including cultural awareness and navigating your identity. Guest speakers also attend to publicise the work they are doing to reduce racial inequity.

**Research approaches and underlying evaluation:** Ongoing evaluation of the group to ensure that it is meeting the needs of its members is being carried out using regular surveys. From this group additional work is being undertaken including further research into issues on placements that affect healthcare students from minoritised communities and strategies that may help to alleviate some of these barriers. Research using narrative inquiry is also being carried out in relation to exploring the transition experience of minoritised Nursing and Midwifery students into university and how their experiences impact sense of belonging during their course and into the Nursing and Midwifery profession.

**Implications for healthcare education:** Healthcare students from minoritised communities face many challenges in their training and studies both within the educational setting and also in the practice learning environment. Having a support group that is facilitated by healthcare academics of colour who have that lived experience enables students to be their authentic selves and have that safe space to openly discuss their concerns and receive appropriate support. The issues highlighted within the group informs the College Learning, Teaching and Assessment and student support strategies to improve these students' experiences.

#### **References:**

GOV.UK. (2020). Equality Act 2010. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/equality-act-2010-guidance>.

Higham, L., Jones, S., Moore, J., Mountford-Zimdars, A., Sabri, D., & Sanders, J. (2015). Causes of differences in student outcomes. Report to HEFCE by King's College London, ARC Network and The University of Manchester. Bristol: HEFCE.

Thomas, L. (2012b). *Building student engagement and belonging in Higher Education at a time of change*. York: Higher Education Academy. Available at: [https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/what-works-student-retention/What\\_Works\\_Summary\\_Report](https://www.heacademy.ac.uk/resources/detail/what-works-student-retention/What_Works_Summary_Report).

**Keywords:** Minoritised, Healthcare Students, Safe Space.