

Interprofessional education: An action learning approach to the development and evaluation of a pilot project at undergraduate level.

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This thesis used an action learning approach to achieve two aims. Firstly to develop the authors knowledge of research and research methods and secondly to design, deliver and evaluate interprofessional education (I.P.E.). An undergraduate I.P.E. module was designed using the Contact Theory and delivered, in February 1999, to final year students of midwifery, nursing, occupational therapy and radiography through a problem-based learning approach. This I.P.E. experience was evaluated in two phases.

Phase one was a positivist/post-positivist evaluation and used a quasi-experimental approach. Questionnaires measured the role perception, subject and skills knowledge that one profession had regarding another profession and participant's enthusiasm for IPE. Pre and post module group interviews with staff and students were also undertaken. Phase two was a 1-year follow up of students' perceptions of their experiences on the module and used an interpretivist approach. This interview data was analysed from a phenomenological perspective.

Phase one results demonstrated some statistically significant differences for some of the questionnaire items but little more than would be expected by chance. Interview and learning index data showed that students had learned about the subject knowledge of other professions with 'all students' combined learning the most about subject knowledge for nurses. Midwifery was revealed as the profession that students had learned most about for skills knowledge. There was a statistically significant difference between professions' enthusiasm for IPE, with radiography the least enthusiastic. Phase two identified several themes including factors that have a detrimental effect on

interprofessional working (I.P.W.), the positive effect of the module on practice and positive and negative views of I.P.E..

My personal learning led me to a broader inquiring approach to research and developed my understanding of research paradigms. I gained knowledge and skills in qualitative research improving my interviewing and qualitative data analysis skills.

The future of interprofessional education is positive at both faculty and NHS levels and I conclude that there is a need for diverse forms of IPE including its delivery in the clinical context. Future research in I.P.E. outcomes should use the qualitative paradigm.