

Multi-professional Learning for Nurses

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Problem-based Learning in Nursing: A new model for a new context?
(editor with K. Wilkie)

Clinical Skills in Nursing: The return of the practical room? (editor
with M. Nicol)

Multi-professional Learning for Nurses

Breaking the boundaries

Edited by

**Sally Glen
and
Tony Leiba**

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Tony Leiba, 2002

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Mark Chaput de Saintonge; Cecilia Edward; Ann Roberts;
June Small; Della Freeth and Scott Reeves; Sally Glen, 2002

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Contents

<i>List of Figures and Table</i>	viii
<i>List of Contributors</i>	ix
<i>Foreword</i>	xi
<i>Preface</i>	xiii
1 The Context – Why the Current Interest?	1
<i>Stuart Cable</i>	
Introduction	1
Multi-professionalism in policy	2
Multi-professionalism in education	7
Multi-professionalism in practice	15
Conclusion	19
Note	20
References	20
2 Multi-professional Education: Definitions and Perspectives	25
<i>Tony Leiba</i>	
Defining terms	26
Opportunities for multi-professional education	28
Multi-professional assumptions	29
Theories of multi-professional education	32
Multi-professional education and the future	34
References	36
3 Joint Training for Integrated Care	40
<i>Dave Sims</i>	
Introduction	40
Historical context	42
Local demand for joint training	43
The rationale for joint training	44
The structure of the programme	45
A framework of common competencies	47
Inter-professional competence	48
A programme based on partnership	50

Challenges encountered	51
Programme evaluation	53
Lessons learned from the previous programmes	54
Evaluation of the South Bank programme	55
Conclusion	58
References	59
4 Inter-professional Teaching Programme on Normal Labour for Midwifery and Medical Students	61
<i>Margaret McCarey and Gary Mires</i>	
Introduction	61
Context	62
The initiative	64
Teaching/Learning methods	65
Planning of the programme	67
Delivery of the programme	67
Evaluation process	70
Evaluation results	71
Limitations	74
Keys to success	75
Implications for the future	76
Conclusion	76
References	77
Appendix 1	78
Appendix 2	82
5 Learning Clinical Skills: an Inter-professional Approach	84
<i>Maggie Nicol and Mark Chaput de Saintonge</i>	
Introduction	84
Inter-professional clinical skills programme	86
The programme structure	87
Discussion	91
Clinical governance	92
References	95
6 A Perspective of Shared Teaching in Ethics	97
<i>Cecilia Edward, Ann Roberts and June Small</i>	
Introduction	97
The key	98

The ideal	98
The picture	101
Aims and learning outcomes	102
Educational strategy	104
Learning and teaching tools	105
Reality challenges	106
Conclusion to reality	109
Evaluation	110
Conclusion	110
References	111
Appendix	112
7 Evaluation of an Inter-professional Training Ward:	
Pilot Phase	116
<i>Della Freeth and Scott Reeves</i>	
Introduction	116
The inter-professional training ward, London	117
Evaluation	118
Discussion of evaluation findings	119
Conclusions	133
Glossary	136
Acknowledgements	136
References	136
8 Inter-professional Education: the Way Forward	139
<i>Sally Glen</i>	
Introduction	139
Multiple stakeholder perspectives	140
An integrated approach to care	141
A system sympathetic to innovation	143
An evidence-based agenda	145
Conclusion	146
References	146
<i>Index</i>	148

List of Figures and Table

Figures

1.1	The Clyde Report: a failure of multi-professional function and recommendations for action	4
1.2	Creating contact between students: a rationale for multi-professional education	14
1.3	Hospital practice: the causes of conflict in the medical and nursing teams	17
3.1	The integration of learning outcomes into one common competency framework	48
3.2	The common competency framework	49
4.1	Assigned responsibility for clinical tasks (Section A) – all students ($p < 0.001$: chi squared 439.5 pre versus post course)	72
4.2	Assigned responsibility for information provision (Section B) – all students ($p < 0.001$: chi squared 245.74 pre versus post course)	73
5.1	Clinical Scenarios used in the inter-professional study	88
6.1	Sample case studies/statements	105

Table

1.1	Aims of inter-disciplinarity	10
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Foreword

Seldom has publication of a book been so timely as the NHS National Plan accords nurses more responsibilities and more opportunities for career progression, and they work with others to create more flexible services in response to the expressed needs and expectations of patients (Secretary of State for Health, 2000).

Inter-professional education is once again being invoked to engender support from the health professions to implement new policies in a spirit of give and take. Yet the means by which such education can help remain ill-understood. The onus rests upon those like the contributors to this book to share what they have learned so that teachers new to inter-professional education need not reinvent the wheel.

Conventional wisdom holds that undergraduates need to discover their professional identities and distinctive expertise before being exposed to learning with other professions. But negative stereotypes towards other professions all too easily form during undergraduate education, in which case beginning practitioners emerge ill-disposed and ill-prepared for collaborative practice. 'Remedial education' is then needed to unlearn negative attitudes and bad habits before working together can begin in earnest.

Many universities have introduced shared modules across pathways for students entering different professions to optimise choice and ensure best use of specialist teaching resources. Moves to introduce inter-professional education into the undergraduate curriculum are therefore going with the grain, but experience teaches that sitting side by side in the same lecture theatres does little or nothing to cultivate understanding and mutual respect between professions. That depends upon interactive learning between the parties and upon the application of that learning to collaborative practice. It is here that the five examples of undergraduate inter-professional education in this book promise to be so helpful.

In turn, they demonstrates how:

- learning was built around a model of care to which both nursing and social work students in the field of learning difficulties were invited to subscribe
- innovative learning methods helped midwifery and medical students to understand respective roles and responsibilities
- joint sessions enabled final-year medical students and newly qualified nurses to learn from each other about acute care in an inter-professional skills centre
- ethical issues introduced into joint seminars for medical and nursing students helped them to appreciate different points of view and 'bond'
- placements on an inter-professional training ward developed profession-specific skills whilst also promoting teamwork and insight into the roles of others

All these projects were evaluated, adding to the growing evidence base about the effectiveness of inter-professional education. Weaknesses are reported squarely in the hope that others may avoid the same pitfalls. Plainly, there is more to inter-professional education than compiling core curricula.

Here then is a distinctive contribution to the burgeoning literature on inter-professional education ably reviewed by Stuart Cable to provide a wide-ranging backdrop that musters argument and evidence. It falls to Tony Leiba and Sally Glen, respectively, to set the scene and point up the salient issues.

Reference

Secretary of State for Health (2000) *The NHS Plan*, London: Department of Health. Cm 4818-1

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Preface

In the past, multi-professional education experiences occurred largely by chance in practice settings where the needs of the client, patient or the situation compelled traditionally orientated professionals to work together. With the increased use of multi-professional healthcare teams, many universities and employing agencies have developed programmes for multi-professional groups of students. The multi-professionals' exposure is primarily intended to increase the present and future professionals' ability and willingness to collaborate with one another in the care of users and patients.

The focus of this book is pre-registration, university-based, multi-professional education initiatives. The aim is to bring together current experience and future developments in multi-professional education. It is intended to offer ideas and practical guidance to those developing multi-professional curricula in the changing climate of health and social care

Chapter 1 explores the question, why the current interest in multi-professional education? This chapter suggests that the current emphasis on a greater need for integration and collaboration between professionals is not simply a product of greater professional awareness or more acute sensitivity to the needs of users but rather a product of the interrelationship of developments in policy, education and practice. Each of these factors is considered. The chapter concludes by suggesting that the introduction of multi-professional learning and teaching cannot be considered in isolation. Whilst moves towards integrated programmes for health and social care professionals are undoubtedly in evidence, the explicit objectives are often unclear. There appears often to be a prevailing idea that it is common sense that if students learn together, they will be better prepared to work together. However, the evidence for this viewpoint may be inconclusive and possibly contradictory.

Chapter 2 raises the highly pertinent question, do we need multi-professional education? In answering this question, the observation is made that it is increasingly difficult to meet the

needs of individuals in modern society, as fragmented services of specialists and experts struggle with and are seldom successful in solving interrelated problems. However, the professions providing health and social care are in transition, and compounded social changes have rendered their relationships to each other, and to the wider society, increasingly challenging and uneasy. At a glance these circumstances may suggest a combination of situations that will inhibit multi-professional co-operation, but the opposite may be taking place. There is increasing recognition of changing demands and pressures on practitioners and a less narrow and functional view of users. In order to address and illuminate these issues, this chapter examines some perspectives of multi-professional education. The dominant themes are: the defining of terms; some of the circumstances which create opportunities for multi-professional education; multi-professional assumptions; theories of multi-professional education; multi-professional education and the future.

Chapter 3 describes the development, implementation and evaluation of a joint training programme, integrating learning disability nursing and social work into one education and training programme leading to two full professional awards – registration as a learning disability nurse (RNMH) and qualification with a diploma in social work (DipSW). This chapter argues that joint training programmes between health and social care can prepare practitioners for the new, more integrated context in which future health and social services are likely to be delivered. This chapter includes reflections on the challenges encountered and on what has been learned since the programme began.

Chapter 4 describes the planning, implementation and evaluation of a programme of teaching on the topic of normal labour to a group of first-year student midwives and third-year medical students. The aim of the programme is to provide a multi-professional learning environment aimed at not only improving knowledge on the topic of normal labour but also to increase awareness of professional roles. The constraints which present during the planning phase of a multi-professional education programme are identified. These constraints include problems with timetabling, huge discrepancies in numbers of students and the different learning methods in place. Despite these difficulties, the programme proved successful, judging by the evaluations of

students and staff. This initiative also produced a shift in attitudes about professional roles and both cohorts of students had more knowledge of the other's responsibilities within a labour ward.

Chapter 5 describes a short, inter-professional programme in acute care, involving final-year medical students and newly qualified nurses. This chapter emphasises that it is important to ensure that students following different professional programmes of study 'learn with and from each other' and are not simply in the same room being taught together. The aim of the programme was to improve working relationships through better communication and a better understanding of each other's role. The authors suggest that learning individual clinical skills is probably most efficiently achieved in uni-professional groups. On the other hand, if the group is inter-professional, some learning about each other's professionalism may occur, but there is a danger that students may leave having gained a better understanding of each other's role but unable, for example, to cannulate, or vice versa. As a means of teaching a range of new clinical skills to newly qualified staff nurses and senior medical students, such a course is probably not effective. However, as a means of helping the participants refine and develop existing skills and increase their understanding of the role of another healthcare professional, such a programme appears to have potential.

Chapter 6 describes shared teaching in ethics between pre-registration nurses and undergraduate medical students. During their training the nursing and medical students meet three times for shared sessions in ethics. These sessions take place at the junior, intermediate and senior levels of training. The global aim is to enable the students to develop personal/professional ethical and moral reasoning to enhance patient care. The reason why ethics was chosen as a topic for shared learning and teaching is that, due to advances in medical knowledge and technology, healthcare professionals are required to be more receptive and sensitive to ethical issues. The chapter describes the development, implementation and evaluation of shared learning and teaching in ethics. To achieve progress to date has required vision, determination, courage, considerable goodwill and support from all participants.

Chapter 7 describes, from the evaluator's perspective, the development and pilot phase of an interprofessional training

ward placement for medical, nursing, occupational therapy and physiotherapy students. The training ward model was pioneered in Sweden and adapted in the light of the Swedish experience and evaluation, and also to meet the needs and aspiration of service providers, educators and students in inner and east London. The evaluation findings are focused upon seven major themes: real life; learning and teaching; problem-based approach; team duties; preparation for training ward experience; training ward patients and impact of the training ward on service delivery. The authors suggest that this initiative has the potential to develop into a valuable mature project that provides an innovative educational experience for students and staff development opportunities that are unique in the UK.

Chapter 8 concludes the book by identifying four themes which have evolved from Chapters 1 to 6. These themes are: multiple stakeholder perspectives; an integrated approach to care; a system sympathetic to innovation and an evidence-based agenda. Chapter 8 argues that if multi-professional education is to become a reality, innovative new approaches are required. Major reviews will be necessary over the next few years within pre-registration and post-registration programmes to allow for future developments of multi-professional learning opportunities across nursing, midwifery, medicine, dentistry, social work and the professions allied to medicine.