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Approaches to Learning in the context of an outcomes-based curriculum

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Approaches to Learning in the context of an outcomes-based curriculum.



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Research Question



- *How does an outcomes-based curriculum influence approaches to learning in an interprofessional postgraduate programme for healthcare professionals?*

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Research Questions



- How do healthcare professionals, as students approach the experiences of learning?
- Do outcome statements drive student learning?
- Do outcome statements encourage or discourage direction of learning?
- Do outcome statements drive teacher activity, selection of content, selection of learning activities and assessment?
- What are the challenges to current understandings of student learning from the lecturers' perspectives?

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Research Design



- **Evaluation Research**
 - Fourth Generation Evaluation, Constructivism.
- **Phenomenology - Husserl**
 - Change in direction following data collection and preliminary analysis.
 - Previous research on approaches to learning underpinned by Phenomenography and Survey approaches using inventories.

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Main Theoretical/Conceptual Foundations



- Deep & Surface Learning
- Barnett *et al's* (2001) conceptualisation of curriculum change around 3 domains of action, knowledge and self .
 - Barnett R, Perry G & Coate K (2001) Conceptualising curriculum change. *Teaching in Higher Education*. 6(4): 435-449.

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Operationalisation of the study



- 1 group of interprofessional postgraduate students (n=11) – senior positions in organisations, demographics...
- Lecturers (n=4) – 2 full-time, 2 part-time.
- External Examiner
- One-to-one in-depth interviews
- Pilot - 2 interviews

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Ethical Issues



- My Role
- Insider Researcher
- Importance of Gatekeeper
- Clarifications to participants
- Timing & Venues of interviews
 - Approval ~ 5 months

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Data Collection & Analysis



- **Data Collection**
 - Interviews (Bracketing)
 - Documentary Analysis
 - Reflective diary
- **Data Analysis**
 - Giorgi's (1985) framework
 - Descriptions are based on experiences within the context of that experience.
 - *Step 1* Getting a sense of the whole
 - *Step 2* Discrimination of meaning units
 - *Step 3* Transformation of the lived experience into psychological language
 - *Step 4* Individual description of the situation
 - *Step 5* The general description of the situated structures

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Empirical Findings



Students:

- Learning as Action
- Learning as Knowledge
- Learning as Personal & Professional Development

Issues of note:

- The weighting on any one of these will depend on the *student's background from a professional perspective, years of experience, current practices in healthcare and motivation to develop their own careers and personal development.*

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Empirical Findings



Lecturers:

- Influence of own backgrounds and current status on their perspectives of student learning.
- Some lecturers challenging the learning outcomes and refining them, while others, were quite keen to use them as a reference check and guide.

External Examiner

- Curriculum mapping
- Assessment – creativity, innovation, challenges, support.
- Students using their own individuality.
- Students applying learning to their own situations and linking back to evidence.

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Major implications of the study



- **Academia**
 - Pluralistic evaluation (Students, Lecturers, External Examiner)
 - Postgraduate Interprofessional Sample
 - Contextual influences
- **Policy**
 - Influence of Curriculum Mapping
 - Transparency of Learning Outcomes
 - Evaluation method

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Key Readings



- Ashworth P & Greasley K (2009) The phenomenology of 'approach to studying': the idiographic turn. *Studies in Higher Education* 34(5): 561-576.
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- Marton F & Booth S (1997) Learning and awareness. Lawrence Erlbaum, Mahwah, NJ.
- Saji R (1997) Talk as data and practice – a critical look at phenomenographic inquiry and the appeal to experience. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 16(2): 173-190.
- Trigwell K & Prosser M (1997) Towards an understanding of individual acts of teaching and learning. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 16(2): 241-252.
- Webb G (1997) Deconstructing deep and surface: Towards a critique of phenomenography. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 33(2): 195-212.

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