Education Horizon-Scanning Bulletin – July 2020

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General Healthcare Education

Unravelling the holy trinity of motivation

**Source:** Journal of Personality

**In a nutshell:** Intrinsic motivation – motivation from within – is generally accepted as being more beneficial than extrinsic motivation which aims either to please, escape punishment, or gain reward. Intrinsic motivation can itself be divided into three types: motivation to know; motivation to accomplish; and motivation for stimulation. In this study Joshua L. Howard, from Monash University in Australia, led a team of researchers reviewing the evidence on intrinsic motivation. The researchers reviewed 78 studies, which included a total of 41,633 participants. They found that motivation to know and motivation to accomplish were difficult to tell apart but had a “moderately strong effect,” on “adaptive student outcomes,” whereas motivation for stimulation was more distinct but, while still beneficial had less of an effect than the other two types.

You can read the abstract of this article at

http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/jopy.12570

Do lectures make any difference?

**Source:** BMC Medical Education

**In a nutshell:** As a history graduate I quickly realised that it was quicker to read lecturers’ books at my own convenience than to get up early to listen to them reading out edited versions of them in lectures. I still managed to get a 2:1 but is the same true for STEM subjects? Attempting to find out was Sheila Anne Doggrell, from Queensland University of Technology. In a study of students doing a BSc in Medical Laboratory Sciences she found that there was no association between either going to lectures or accessing lecture recordings and academic outcomes. “Reasons for attending lectures included greater perceived learning and interaction with staff and other students, while reasons for not attending related to inconvenience or other commitments. Lecture recordings were accessed to clarify, revise or catch up on content, or as an alternative to attending lectures. One-third of students provided additional feedback on accessing lecture recordings, and the most common themes were ‘flexibility’ and ‘useful’. Lecture slides (PowerPoints), independently of lecture recordings, were used extensively by the students.”

You can read the whole of this article at


Will the smartphone’s time ever come?

**Source:** International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education
In a nutshell: Smartphone sales have now overtaken sales of laptops, desktops and tablets. In this study Shakeel Iqbal, from Iqra University in Pakistan, and Zeeshan Ahmed Bhatti, from the University of Portsmouth, interviewed 22 lecturers about their views on the use of smartphones in higher education. The lecturers thought smartphones were an effective medium for off-campus learning and communication, both among themselves, and with their students. They also thought smartphones were suitable for explaining complex topics to students as audiovisual content available on the internet could be shared easily. However, most were sceptical about using smartphones for educational purposes as they considered them to be a source of distraction, time-wasting, “technostress,” and emotional detachment. They also thought the small size of the phone and keyboard undermined their use in education. “Lack of training and support, lack of technical knowledge and background, excessive work load and lack of incentives for using technology in education were reported as major barriers in adoption of Smartphones.”

You can read the whole of this article at https://educationaltechnologyjournal.springeropen.com/articles/10.1186/s41239-020-00203-4

Drug treatment and social work – a case of positive attitude?
Source: Social Work in Health Care

In a nutshell: Drug abuse is still a major problem in many parts of the world and those people who try and help drug addicts are often at a heightened risk of burnout themselves. In this study Ngoc N. Nguyen, from Thang Long University in Hanoi, studied 229 social-work students at a university in the east of the US. The study found that knowledge and positive attitudes were key factors stimulating social work students’ motivation to work with drug addicts and that knowledge was the most influential factor. The students were more likely to want to work with drug addicts if they had positive attitudes towards them and increased knowledge of drugs and drug-related problems. However, there was no significant difference in motivation between those who had negative attitudes and other people.

You can read the abstract of this article at http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00981389.2020.1790078

Interprofessional Education
Faking it – is this the key to interprofessional education (IPE)
Source: BMC Medical Education

In a nutshell: In the TV series Faking It people working in one profession attempted to pass themselves off as members of another. A house painter passed himself off as a modern artist and a shy cellist had a go at being a DJ; strangely enough modern artists and DJs weren’t trusted to decorate a front room without
splashing or tackle a Dvorak cello concerto. In this study a team of researchers led by Jun Wang, from Wuhan University of Science and Technology, adopted a similar approach to interprofessional education by adding a “profession-role exchange component,” into their IPE programme with medical, pharmacy and nursing students all swapping roles. Compared to a traditional IPE programme the addition of professional role-exchange resulted in the significant increase in students’ positive attitudes towards interprofessional collaboration, and the enhancement of students’ role awareness.”

You can read the whole of this article at

Going interprofessional – who’s better doctors or nurses?
Source: BMC Medical Education

In a nutshell: Interprofessional education (IPE) recognises the reality that doctors, nurses, and other health professionals work together and tries to prepare people for it. In this study Christine Straub, from the University of Freiburg in Germany, led a team of researchers investigating attitudes to interprofessional collaboration (IPC) and experiences of IPE in a study of 75 nurses and 70 doctors. They found that “medical doctors acquired most competences important for IPC during day-to-day work and reported a substantial lack of IPE. Nursing staff on the other hand did report significant interprofessional education during their training as well as ongoing interprofessional learning during day-to-day work. Nurses also appreciated IPE more.”

You can read the whole of this article at

Medical Education
How COVID-19 is affecting medical students
Source: BMC Medical Education

In a nutshell: In this study Byung Choi, from Hillingdon Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, led a team of researchers investigating how final-year medical students’ education was being affected by COVID-19. 440 students, from 32 UK universities responded to a survey. 38.4% had had their final OSCEs cancelled. 43% had had their assistantship placements postponed and 77.3% had had their electives cancelled. The impact of COVID-19 on OSCEs, written examinations and student assistantships significantly affected students’ preparedness. However, only changes to student assistantships had a significant effect on their confidence. Most of the students felt that the changes were necessary and agreed that helping out in hospitals during the outbreak would be a valuable learning opportunity.

You can read the whole of this article at
What do students really think about research?

Source: BMC Medical Education

In a nutshell: Medical research is a bit like a sewage farm – everyone wants to get the benefits but few people want to work in it. People who do research and treat patients are invaluable though, as they form a bridge between research and practice and help new innovations get into practice as quickly as possible. In this study Belinda W.C. Ommering, from Leiden University in the Netherlands, led a team of researchers who interviewed 13 first-year medical students in an attempt to find out what they thought about research. The students were already able to identify many aspects of research. The relevance of research for practice helped to motivate the students to get involved in it whereas doing statistics put them off. Other motivating factors included: acknowledgement; autonomy; and inspiring role models. Demotivating factors included: a lack of autonomy and relevance and inadequate collaboration.

You can read the whole of this article at https://bmcmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12909-020-02117-1

Income and medical-school admission

Source: BMC Medical Education

In a nutshell: One might expect bright, hard-working people to earn more money and to have bright, hard-working children who, in turn, are more likely to be successful themselves. For some people though, this is an affront to natural justice and in this study Tyler Pitre, from McMaster University in Canada, led a team of researchers studying the “median total neighbourhood income,” of medical school applicants. This was $98,816 for applicants, around $28,480 higher than the Canadian average. Those not admitted to medical school had a median total neighbourhood income of $98,304 compared to $105,984 for those admitted. Applicants in the top quarter income group had a 54% greater chance of being offered a place compared to those in the bottom quarter.

You can read the whole of this article at https://bmcmededuc.biomedcentral.com/articles/10.1186/s12909-020-02112-6

All aboard the coaching bandwagon

Source: BMC Medical Education

In a nutshell: Centuries after Dick Turpin and teams of horses dragging portly gentlemen in wigs through mud coaching has again become a growth industry – this time round more associated with coffee, armchairs and embarrassing confessions of inadequacy. In this study Joanna Veazey Brooke, from the University of Kansas, led a
team of researchers who interviewed 20 lecturers at a medical school in the year a coaching scheme was implemented. Four main benefits were reported by the lecturers:

- Student guidance
- Identifying student issues early
- Helping students develop work-life balance
- Fostering clinician connectivity

The two main challenges were uncertainty regarding how adaptive the coaching sessions should be, and difficulty engaging in some of the roles simultaneously, like mentoring and supervision.

You can read the whole of this article at

When the ducklings don’t have to be on the pond

Source: The Guardian

In a nutshell: Imprinting happens when a duckling fastens on to the first object it sees, identifies it as a source of nourishment and support and decides to follow it around wherever it goes. A similar approach lies behind consultants’ ward rounds for medical students but these present problems in an era of social-distancing; it’s not much use if the last student in the crocodile is in a different postcode from the consultant doing the teaching. Imperial College have now started the world’s first virtual ward round for medical students. Consultants wear a Microsoft Hololens which streams video to students’ computers meaning an entire class of 350 students can watch a consultant examining patients. Teachers are able to pin virtual pictures to the display, such as X-rays, drug charts or radiographs. The virtual ward rounds can be recorded, allowing universities to create a library of cases. That means more students will get to see patients with rare conditions and have a better understanding of the symptoms and how the patient acts.

You can read the whole of this article at
https://www.theguardian.com/society/2020/jul/04/london-hospital-starts-virtual-ward-rounds-for-medical-students

Reviewing junior doctors’ scrapbooks – could do better

Source: BMC Medical Education

In a nutshell: Children often keep scrapbooks containing – among other things – bus tickets, party invitations, postcards and squashed invertebrates. Similarly, albeit on a slightly more sophisticated level, junior doctors are often asked to keep e-portfolios, recording what they’ve done, how much they’ve learnt, and what
experiences they’ve had. They’re also supposed to contribute to self-regulated learning – trainees’ ability to work out what they need to learn and take action to do so. In this study R. van der Gulden, from Radboud University Medical Centre in the Netherlands, led a team of researchers reviewing the contents of 1,022 anonymous e-portfolios from trainee GPs. “Content analysis showed a limited documentation of reflective entries, and available entries mainly described events and experiences without explanations and context. Feedback was generally limited to comments on what went well and lacked specificity, context and suggestions for future action. Learning goals and plans were short of specificity, but did contain challenging topics and different goals were compatible with each other. 75% of the e-portfolios showed (limited) signs of monitoring.”

You can read the whole of this article at

The doctor will educate you now
Source: PLoS One

In a nutshell: One would have thought that there were already enough patients cluttering up GPs’ surgeries without dragging students into them as well but some people think GPs teaching medical students is a good idea. In this study Marcus May, from Hannover Medical School, led a team of researchers asking 523 GPs why they had volunteered to teach students. “Helping others,” and “interest,” were the predominant motives. The main incentives were an ambition to work as a medical preceptor; to improve undergraduate education; and to share knowledge. “Material compensation was of minor importance.” Some doctors said time constraints were a barrier, but this was “not a general concern.”

You can read the whole of this article at
https://journals.plos.org/plosone/article?id=10.1371/journal.pone.0045846

What do medical students know about breast cancer?
Source: BMC Medical Education

In a nutshell: Breast cancer is the most common form of cancer in women, and the second most common after lung cancer in the whole population. It’s prognosis and successful treatment depends on prompt diagnosis, which, in turn, depend on people being aware of, and checking for, its symptoms. In this study Saleha Qasim, from King Edward Medical University in Lahore, led a team of researchers investigating knowledge of breast cancer in female medical students. The students knew more about the symptoms of, and risk factors for, breast cancer in their clinical years. 38.7% rarely checked their breasts. 41.7% were fairly, or very, confident about detecting a change in their breasts but 50% did not notice changes. 77.4% said they would contact a doctor within a week of finding a change. “Confidence about detecting a change significantly improved after the start of clinical training.”
Does mental practice make perfect?

**Source:** BMC Medical Education

**In a nutshell:** Many people run through important events like presentations, dates, and driving tests in their heads before they actually happen. For the more optimistic, this mental practice (MP) may even not culminate in bottles being thrown, people escaping through toilet windows and protracted bouts of weeping while attempting parallel parking. In this study Huon Snelgrove and Ben Gabbott, from St George’s University Hospitals NHS Trust in London, reviewed the research on its effect on surgical performance and learning. They found six systematic reviews which met their quality criteria “of which all reported positive and varying benefits of MP on surgical performance, confidence and coping strategies.” However, “the impacts on transfer to practice and the long-term acquisition of skills, but also personal uptake of mental practice routines, were not reported.”

You can read the whole of this article at


How young doctors learn clinical thinking

**Source:** BMC Medical Education

**In a nutshell:** It’s one thing knowing a little bit about the history of art, quite another painting like Vermeer. In the same way new doctors might know a lot about anatomy and physiology but struggle to apply it to patients. In this study Rachel Locke, from the University of Winchester, led a team of researchers interviewing educators about the development of clinical thinking in trainee doctors. Three themes emerged from the interviews:

- Working in an educationally-minded culture
- Proximity of the educator to the trainee physician
- Trajectory of the trainee physician

“The departments in which these educators worked emphasised the importance for the education of trainee physicians. All members of the team were responsible for education of the team, and all members, particularly senior nurses, were able to give feedback upon the trainee physicians’ progress. Educators described working side by side with their trainee physician and frequently being in close proximity to them which means that the educator was both easily accessible and spent more time with their trainee physicians. They described a trajectory of the trainee physicians through the placement with close monitoring and informal assessment throughout.”

You can read the whole of this article at

Nurse Education
When new nurses are like new vicars
Source: Nurse Education Today

In a nutshell: Some people argue that new nurses are a bit like new vicars who know all about Old Testament Hebrew but rather less about leaky drainpipes and how to chair a PCC meeting. One area they sometimes fall down on is electronic medical records (EMRs). They might have escaped the worst of it but even doctors and nurses have to spend hours sat in front of computer screens filling out forms. In this study Lyndall Mollart, from the University of Newcastle in New South Wales, led a team of researchers reviewing the evidence on the use of EMRs in nurse education. The researchers found 23 articles that met their quality criteria and identified three major themes:

- Advantages of using EMRs in academic settings
- Identified challenges and frustrations of EMR programmes
- Developing an academic EMR programme and implementing EMR education programmes in stages

“All papers acknowledged that EMR will be standard in healthcare and should be viewed as an ‘essential tool’ for inclusion in undergraduate nursing programs.”

You can read the abstract of this article at
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104517

Clinical supervision – better to give than to receive?
Source: Nurse Education Today

In a nutshell: Clinical supervision is an important part of a nurses’ education yet there has been comparatively little research into how it feels to be on the receiving end of it. Attempting to rectify the situation was a team of researchers led by Deema Mahasneh from Mutah University in Jordan who held six focus groups on the subject with 48 nursing students. The researchers found that an empowering supervision experience comprised “being willing and patient,” and “working hand-in-hand,” with students. A disempowering supervision experience included abuse of power and grade obsession; incompetent supervision and “lack of time detected for students.” The former enhanced students’ clinical learning whilst the latter reduced their motivation gaining knowledge and skills and reduced the students’ self-confidence.

You can read the abstract of this article at
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104515
Do I look good doing this research?

**Source:** Nurse Education Today

**In a nutshell:** In this study Jennifer Gunberg Ross, from Villanova University in Pennsylvania, led a team of researchers investigating nursing students’ views on educational research; possible the research equivalent of “do I look alright in this outfit?” 436 nursing students took part in the study which found that the students had positive attitudes towards educational and pedagogical research. Prior experience as a research assistant or a research participant was significantly associated with a more positive attitude to research. Factors in favour of getting involved in educational research were the potential to improve practice; research-topic interest; and opportunities for personal and professional development “while time-related concerns were identified as barriers to research participation. Qualitative data supported these findings, and also revealed some negative attitudes toward pedagogical research participation, concerns about current educational practices, and confusion about the definition of education research.

You can read the abstract of this article at

[https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104522](https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104522)

What makes a good digital teacher?

**Source:** Nurse Education Today

**In a nutshell:** As any lecturer who’s stood with sweat pouring down their back, while their class goes restive, waiting for a little blue wheel to go around will tell you “a high degree of competence in digital pedagogy is required of educators to meet the challenge of educating future professionals who are themselves highly digitally competent.” In other words they’ll giggle – or worse – if you can’t get your Powerpoint to work. In this study Iina Ryhta, from the University of Turku, in Finland, led a team of researchers who interviewed 37 social- and health-care lecturers from six Finnish universities and asked them what made a good digital teacher. The researchers found that “competence in digital pedagogy involved pedagogical, digital, and ethical skills and awareness.” They were aware of the possibilities of the technology and were positive about how it could be used in education but they worried it could be used for its own sake rather than because it made for better teaching.

You can read an abstract of this article at


Podcasting – what does the evidence say?

**Source:** Nurse Education in Practice

**In a nutshell:** Podcasting is an ugly word for a marvellous invention whereby audio broadcasts can be “stored,” online and downloaded and listened to at people’s
convenience. In this study Siobhan O’Connor, from Edinburgh University, led a team of researchers reviewing the evidence on the use of podcasting in nurse education. They found 26 studies that met their quality threshold. Three themes emerged from the research which were: learning and other outcomes; antecedents to learning; and learning process. “Students seemed to acquire new knowledge and skills by using podcasts and it also appeared to improve clinical confidence. The organisation of podcasting, digital literacy and e-Professionalism, the personal motivation of learners, and flexible access to the technology seemed to impact the delivery of this educational intervention. Mechanisms that appeared to affect the learning process were the speed of exchange, the type of social media user, the timeframe, quality of information, the functionality of podcasts and other learning activities.”

You can read the abstract of this article at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2020.102827

Spotting the deteriorating patient
Source: Nurse Education in Practice

In a nutshell: Some patients go downhill slowly, like an evening stroll on the South Downs, whereas others hurtle towards what Philip Larkin called “extinction’s alp,” like a bobsleigh on the Cresta Run. Spotting deteriorating patients is a crucial skill for nurses and in this study Beverley Duff, from the University of the Sunshine Coast in Australia, led a team of researchers who interviewed 22 acute-care nurses who had taken part in a multi-modal education programme designed to teach nurses how to recognise, and respond to, patients going downhill. Four themes emerged from the interviews which were:

- Enhanced confidence
- Effective communication
- Supportive culture
- Early response

You can read the abstract of this article at https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2020.102835

When team-based learning (TBL) goes digital
Source: Nurse Education in Practice

In a nutshell: Teamwork is a method of organisation in which individuals come together, united by a common cause, to become less than the sum of their parts with endless faffing and discussion replacing getting the job done quickly and squeezing in a quick game of Word Wipe. Some people seem quite keen on it though and in this study Judy Currey, from Deakin University in Australia, led a team of researchers assessing the effectiveness of an online team-based learning package – designed to
reduce the administrative burden of TBL - in a study of 162 postgraduate nursing and optometry students and eight lecturers. The researchers found the new system had significantly higher levels of student engagement. The students were also highly satisfied with the system leading the researchers to conclude that “high satisfaction and engagement outcomes suggest digital TBL is feasible, efficient, engaging and well-accepted by stakeholders.”

You can read the abstract of this article at

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2020.102833

How to pick out the struggling student

Source: Nurse Education Today

In a nutshell: Sadly, from time to time, it becomes obvious that some nursing students are not cut out for the job. How to spot and deal with them is a vexed issue and in this study Tallulah Browne, from the University of Auckland, led a team of researchers reviewing the evidence on this issue. The researchers found 14 studies that met their quality criteria and identified three key themes from them:

- Defining the undefinable
- Red-flag characteristics of the struggling nurse
- The power imbalance of student and educator

You can read the abstract of this article at

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104528

Death, taxes and surveys

Source: Nurse Education Today

In a nutshell: It used to be the case that only death and taxes were inevitable but it often feels like filling out surveys has been added to this list. In this study Mary Clynes, from Dublin City University, led a team of researchers getting their teeth into the Republic of Ireland’s National Survey of Student Engagement. The researchers found that the “students engaged most in activities that are considered core to higher education: higher order learning, collaborative learning and effective learning strategies. Although students perceived that lecturers engaged in effective teaching practices, they reported limited out of class interaction with lecturers.”

You can read the abstract of this article at

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104529

Death, taxes and surveys II

Source: Nurse Education Today
In a nutshell: As part of the same analysis of the National Survey of Student Engagement the researchers also examined the effects of nursing students working alongside their degree courses. In a sample of 634 students, they found that 423 worked during term time. The students who did work, worked for an average of 15 hours a week. Non-traditional students (mature students and those with children) worked most hours. Working did not affect students’ engagement, but it did reduce the number of hours students studied.

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104513

How do disabled nursing students cope with clinical placements?
Source: Nurse Education Today

In a nutshell: In this study I. Epstein, from York University in Toronto, led a team of researchers who interviewed 14 nursing lecturers and 14 nursing students with disabilities to see how the latter had found their clinical placements. Three themes emerged from the interviews which were:

- An immovable clinical environment in relation to technology and time
- A perceived conflict between nursing and disability identity
- A need to shift responsibility upwards while listening to lived experience

You can read the abstract of this article at
https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2020.104505

What helps nursing students bounce back?
Source: International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health

In a nutshell: There are a number of different possible reactions to a setback: start weeping and go into a decline; carry on as if nothing had happened; or, use the opportunity to learn lessons and grow. In this study Mi Ra Yun, from Chung-Ang University in Seoul, led a team of researchers looking into the links between academic motivation, resilience and post-traumatic growth (PTG) in a study of 291 nursing students. They found that nursing students with intrinsic academic motivation “were more likely to have higher PTG scores and [that] resilience mediated the relationship between academic motivation and PTG.”

You can read the abstract of this article at
http://dx.doi.org/10.3390/ijerph17134901

When grown-ups play let’s pretend
Source: Nurse Education Today
In a nutshell: In this article Cynthia Spies and Yvonne Botma, from the University of the Free State in South Africa, attempted to work with, and draw up tips for, mature nursing students taking part in simulation exercises. They concluded that mature students should be fully orientated beforehand about simulation practice and what is expected of them. “Through scaffolding and a succession of at least six to 10 simulation sessions, learner independence and adult-learner behaviour can be developed.” Other tips include:

- Begin with less-complex scenarios before moving on to more complex ones
- Keep the simulation environment as authentic and reliable as possible
- Avoid punitive de-briefing

You can read the abstract of this article at

https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nepr.2020.102834

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