



Dr Debbie Porteous (UK)
Mrs Barbara Foggo (UK)

*A realistic evaluation study of the
registered nurse degree
apprenticeship program*



A Realist Evaluation of a Registered Nurse Degree programme

Ms Barbara Foggo and Dr Debbie Porteous



**Northumbria
University**
NEWCASTLE

The Newcastle upon Tyne Hospitals
NHS Foundation Trust



Context

- Designed to meet the requirements of the **Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Standards for Pre-registration Nursing Education (2018)**
- Designed to meet the requirements for **Institute of Apprenticeship Standards (ST0781) Registered Nurse Degree.**
- Designed to meet the requirements for **Programme Framework for Northumbria Awards (PFNA).**
- The programme will enable students to practise in a safe, professional, compassionate, caring and respectful manner, advocating for people and maintaining dignity and well-being.



Uniqueness of Apprenticeship Programme

- Partnership working: Northumbria University and Employer.
- Advanced standing-Application of RPL (APEL/APL) (up to 18 months of theory/practice)
- A proactive approach to the socialisation of students, enabling the development of professional identity and behaviour.
- Enhanced learning and teaching within modules through the greater utilisation of technology, global citizenship; communication and team work, organising and planning, problem solving, leadership, professionalism.
- Work based learning and teaching philosophy. The workplace is a focus of learning. It requires reflective and analytical skills. An independent, highly motivated learner.

Student Journey

Pre-programme

Pre-briefing day-outlining commitment and expectations

Internal advert

Shortlisting

Interview Process;

1st stage Collaborative Trust and University interview (service user involvement) Value Based Recruitment

2nd Stage Completion of APEL/APL documentation

Successful at both stages offer made subject to Safeguards; DBS, Occupational health, reference request, self declaration, Professional Suitability Panel

(Advanced standing 120 credits level 4, 40 credits level 5 and NMC progression criteria 1 competencies)

Year 2

Induction process (one week)

Completion of Apprenticeship Commitment Statement

Transition to Higher Education

Support systems

Programme level support, programme leads, module tutors, student services, library etc.

Peer support. Personal tutor (Assessing, monitoring, signposting, action plan)

Mentor/Sign off mentor/Practice Placement Facilitators/Practice learning team

Coaching principles

Programme plan-bespoke placements

Supernumerary status, 3 days a week practice, 2 days a week protected study time (1 day teaching and 1 day directed study time)

Practice Assessment Documentation and Personal and Professional Development File

Year 2 completion of 60 credits level 5

Final year

Fitness to Practice – to ensure that students meet the required level of competence for safe and effective practice

Fitness for Award – to ensure students reach the academic standard for graduation with a **Promotion of Lifelong Learning and Student Development**

Research rich, informed learning.

Blended learning a focus of work based approach. Integration of theory and practice.

Final year completion of 120 credits level 6

Gateway

End Point assessment

Research Study

Research title

A realist evaluation study exploring the student journey during the 18 months registered nurse degree apprenticeship (RNDA) programme

Objectives

- Identify factors which influence the experiences of students during their RNDA programme
- Describe the factors influencing the student experiences in terms of context, mechanisms and outcomes
- Develop an understanding of how the factors interact for individual students and how this has influenced their experience during the RNDA programme
- Conceptualise and theorise the findings into a model to inform future RNDA programmes and nurse education

Research methodology and methods

- Realistic Evaluation (Pawson and Tilly 1997, Wong et al, 2012), using the context, processes and outcomes as the framework for analysis.
- Mixed methods are being used including individual semi-structured interviews with students at three points during the programme. A focus group will be undertaken at the end of the programme (Kruegar & Casey 2014).
- Documentary data is being used including extracts from their weekly reflective logs, academic profiles and practice assessment documents.
- In addition, practice mentors involved in the support of students whilst on clinical placement will attend focus groups to discuss their experiences of supporting these students.
- Qualitative data from the interviews, focus group and reflective logs are being manually coded using the CMO configurations as a framework to guide the analysis whilst allowing other issues to emerge (Steven et al 2018).

Initial findings

Context

- Value of prior experiences and study
- Shortened 18 month pathway desirable
- Funded programme – no financial implications
- Trust commitment to 'growing their own' as a new way of working

Mechanisms

- Effective collaboration between University/Trust
- Good support systems in place
- Theory-practice interface
- Well balanced curriculum

Outcomes

- Pebble pad as vehicle for achievement of practice competencies
- Academic achievement and progress
- Trust investment and positive career trajectory

OUTCOMES: Trust investment and positive career trajectory

- *“ it is a win-win for all of us, these students go above and beyond and from day one every area in the Trust will want to employ them...” (Fg1).*
- *“ I feel valued as a Trust employee, they have invested in me, I feel so lucky to have a guaranteed a job, I have real ambition to go further in my career...” (In1).*
- *“ I have worked in the Trust for eight years and my ambition was always to be a staff nurse and this is my time...” (In3).*
- *“I would like to get a 2:1, be a band 6 in Gynae, they have already offered me a job when I was on placement, I am just inspired to go further and aim high and would like to do my masters in the future...” (In4).*
- *“ My previous role was in dermatology and I can see myself now as a surgical nurse practitioner...but keeping my options open... feel so privileged that the Trust believe in me... ” (In5)*

Summary to date

- The apprenticeship students have a very different profile both academically and in practice to the traditional three year programme students.
- Previous health care experience as an assistant practitioner and academic study at level 5 appears to provide a solid foundation for a shortened registered nurse programme.
- Early findings show that students have developed a much better evidence base to underpin practice during the programme to date where there is a strong theory-practice interface.
- Transition from assistant practitioner to student nurse has been a challenge to some students but the mentors have valued their prior experiences.
- Early findings suggest that this entry route into nursing is innovative and will help to improve nurse recruitment, employability and develop the future health care workforce.

References

Carper, J. and Tubbs, N. (2017) Degree apprenticeships, the 'joy of learning' excellence framework, and the 'common good' *Journal of Further and Higher Education* DOI: 10.1080/0309877X.2017.1356917.

Institute of Apprenticeships (2016) *Registered Nurse degree* (ST0293/01) <https://www.instituteforapprenticeships.org/apprenticeshipstandards/registered-nurse-degree/> (accessed 9/12/18).

Kruegar, R.A. and Casey, M.A. (2015) *Focus Groups: A Practical Guide for Applied Research* 5th Edition London: Sage Publications.

Nursing & Midwifery Council (2010) *Standards for pre-registration nursing education*. London: NMC.

Pawson, R. and Tilley, N. (1997) *Realistic evaluation* London: Sage Publications.

Steven, A., Larkin, V., Stewart, J. and Bateman, B. (2018) The value of continuing professional development: A realistic evaluation of a multi-disciplinary workshop for health visitors dealing with children with complex needs' *Nurse Education Today* 67 pp 56-63.



Thankyou
Any questions?

