

What are the key dimensions of the personal tutor role for nurse education today? A literature review

MSc in Higher Professional Education
(Oxford Brookes University)

Objectives of the Review

- To investigate the student expectations and experiences of personal tutoring an academic and non-academic support during their course in Higher Education
- To analyse and explain how the personal tutor role can maximise learning potential within nurse education
- To explore the key skills, training and development needs for nurse lecturers undertaking the personal tutor role

Background to the accepted position of the Personal Tutor Role

- Definitions and models of personal tutoring
- Institutional perspectives – widening participation/integrating personal tutor time into the curriculum
- Dearing report (1997)
 - Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA, 2004)
 - Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) funded University project PADSHE
 - Government White Paper into the Future of HE (2003)
 - Higher Education Academy
- National Student Survey 2005

Research Design

- Literature Review as a research method
- Rationale of literature review for this study
- Key Features of a Literature review
- Validity and Reliability as related to Qualitative research (Rigour)
- Critical Review Forms (McMasters University USA)

Method

- Data Sources including databases+search terms
- Inclusion/Exclusion criteria
- Validity and Reliability
- Data synthesis to get to 17 Papers
- Relevance to practice and policy

Some Findings

- Students valued the personal contact to settle into University and stay focused (enabling Student Development)
- Learner isolation
- Managing transition
- Peers not a replacement for staff
- Reflection on strengths and weakness aid development and persistence
- Personal contact before a crisis
- Intercultural sensitivity
- Use of reflection (practice)
- Lack of support from University staff a key factor to leave

- Lecturers pointed to lack of training and confidence with the role “swampy lowlands”
- Lack of formal guidelines
- Viewed as an important part of lecturers work but inequitable workload “supporter”
- Formative or Summative moved role into that of assessor “gatekeeper”
- Setting of boundaries
- Use of technology
- Needs to know the curriculum “up-to-datedness”
- Low success rate associated with not having met in the last 10 weeks
- Not a one-size-fits-all approach

Emerging Themes

- **Demonstration of a Relationship**
 - Personal supervision
 - Curriculum issues
 - Confidentiality
- **Maximising Learning**
 - Assessment
 - Practice issues
 - Employability
- **Recognition of a Professional Role**
 - Staff Development and Training
 - Central Support services
 - Workload
 - Code of Practice

Demonstration of a Relationship

- Establishing a relationship (student-student/student-staff/student-University)
- Personal Tutoring in a Virtual Learning Environment
- Curriculum knowledge
- Development of PDP (Portfolio)
- Reflection in practice
- Cultural issues
- Confidentiality

Maximising Learning

- **Formative or Summative** (alters relationship)
- **Nursing Practice** – underpinning professional knowledge and values with practice based evidence
- **Professional culture** – Personal tutors seeing tutees in practice
- **Popular students** (Popular patients)
- **Socialization and role modelling of caring behaviours**
- **Employability**

Recognition of a Professional Role

Personal Tutoring Policy	Focus for each Year Personal/Professional/ Choice	Induction process
Code of Good Practice	Skills training especially with the distressed student	Guide for both students and staff
Lecturers Educational Needs to facilitate reflection and academic development	Workload and equity of number of students	Good quality Central Support Services
Lecturer to take the initiative if the student did not	Published referral pathways	Component part of PGCE

16 Recommendations including:

- Further research utilising a wider range of research methods to explore benefits of personal tutoring
- Further research utilising a wider range of research methods into long-term effects of personal tutoring on retention
- Further research on support mechanisms for student nurses on clinical placement
- Organisational systems to improve contact whilst on clinical placement
- Use of e-technology, mobile technology and on-line support

- Structured Personal Tutor programme building different focus into each year of the course
- Access to Central Support services to be widely published and disseminated
- Published guidelines or Code of Good Practice for staff and students
- Include personal tutoring in PGCE course
- Evidence of acknowledgement of workload for personal tutor time

Conclusion

- There is a clear dissonance between student and tutor expectations of the role
- The role of induction is crucial
- Linking of academic and personal development of the student
- Encouraging independent learning
- Counter-balancing culture shock
- Clearer vision for the role not just an add-on
- Utilising emerging technology (e-learning strategies)
- Research on nursing students' opinion
- Longitudinal research on benefits of Personal Tutoring
- Skills training for nurse lecturers

Personal Reflections

- Refining research skills
- Using technical tools of

Endnotes

Mind Genius

Document Mapping

