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The ePortfolio Bridge to Professional Proficiency: An Evaluation

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Abstract

This paper evaluates the Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) proficiency ePortfolio at an English Higher Education Institute as a competency-based assessment tool that enables linking theory to practice. Student ePortfolios created since 2012 were examined for the different types of connections the SCPHN ePortfolio afforded making competency-based assessment reliable and valid. We discuss how reflections structured as a spinal column conceptual model enable students to develop self-awareness and critical thinking skills as they move from being Novice to Proficient Health Visitors and School Nurses. The reflections, which describe practice experiences, are analyzed and evaluated with reference to theory, past experience, research for application, and improvement in future practice. The ePortfolio space affords discussion between students and their Practice Teachers making reflective practice a shared activity. The findings suggest the value of the ePortfolio as a bridging environment to demonstrate student development and growth as future Specialist Community Public Health Nurses (SCPHN) and for the PTs and the course team to follow their journey as guides by the side.

Background to ePortfolios

Many educators see digital or electronic portfolios (ePortfolios) as vital to learning, teaching, and assessment (Karsten, 2012; Richardson et

al., 2012; Goodyear et al., 2013); they are digital presentations of students' experiences, achievements, and aspirations for a particular audience. Additionally, this use of ePortfolios incorporates information technology, thus aligning the educational process in professional degree programs to 21st-century teaching and learning scholarship. Furthermore, the value of promoting ePortfolios in education is their facilitation for accountability and autonomy mainly because they are believed to encourage students to take responsibility for their learning needs, as well as the direction, progress, and quality of that learning (Harris et al., 2001; Joyce, 2005; Butler et al., 2006; Garrett & Jackson, 2006; Pincombe et al., 2010; Garrett et al., 2013; Karsten, 2012).

Different sectors, disciplines, and professional bodies have their own approaches to using ePortfolios (Brandes & Boskic, 2008). For example, in academia, ePortfolios are commonly used as a tool to display achievements and evidence of mastery; use of ePortfolios has been advocated to demonstrate nursing student accomplishments as well as to document program and course outcomes (Wassef et al., 2012) while health professionals are increasingly adopting this relatively new "tool" to store their certificates, achievements, and employment records, a process welcomed by nursing regulation bodies such as the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) in the UK. The opportunity for students to document, analyze, and evaluate

their clinical practice experience in an ePortfolio appears to provide a more utilitarian framework to bridge theory and practice, and highlight learning in practice as a key role in nursing professional development (Jensen & Saylor, 1994; Landers, 2000). Thus, ePortfolios are a natural candidate to hold supporting evidence relevant to learning and achievement which demonstrates competencies (Barrett, 2007).

Competency-based Assessment in Nursing and ePortfolios

Competence in nursing can be described as the acquisition of knowledge, the development of psychomotor skills, and the ability to apply the knowledge and skills appropriately in a given situation (Benner, 1984; McCready, 2007; Decker et al., 2008). It is perceived as a common language to demonstrate the complex integration of knowledge including professional judgment, skills, values, and attitude (Fukada, 2018); it is also an intelligent practical skillset that integrates different factors and issues in complex ways, specific to each circumstance. Learning this skillset, therefore, helps the clinician become one who not only “knows that” but “knows how”—“the ability to do a particular activity to a prescribed standard” rather than simply demonstrate what they know (Hargraves, 2000, p. 286).

Moreover, Benner’s (1984) “[Stages of Clinical Competence](#)” clarify that in the acquisition and development of a skill, a nurse passes through five levels of proficiency: novice, advanced beginner, competent, proficient, and expert. This framework appears to be ideally suited to nurses’ ePortfolio development because proficiency at each of Benner’s five levels of competence can be established by evaluating students’ outcomes at each stage of their learning journey. When ePortfolios demonstrate the progress and development of students over a specific period, they are referred to as developmental ePortfolios (Wassef et al., 2012). The ePortfolio, therefore, illustrates a changing landscape on the students’ learning journey due to the changes in attitudes, knowledge

acquisition, and skills developed while connecting them to their future professions as they transition from reliance on abstract principles as a novice, to the use of past concrete experience as an expert. Therefore, as Harris et al. (2001) claim, the ePortfolio is an excellent choice for demonstrating nursing competence as the content demonstrates growth and personal development in care situations.

Reflection in ePortfolios

ePortfolios provide a platform for students to demonstrate evidence of knowledge, skills, attitudes, and content understanding through reflective learning and critical analysis of both theory and practice while also promoting personal and professional development planning (Murray & Currant, 2006; Joyce, 2005; Challis, 1999). In other words, ePortfolios act as an online learning space that encourages integrative learning fostering student reflection on academic learning, personal and professional goals, and career planning to increase student performance, retention, and engagement with their own learning behavior and development processes. Moores and Parks (2010) explain that this is due to an ePortfolio’s strong capacity to enable a user to rethink and analyze situations through reflective practice and learning from experience. Therefore, reflection and self-assessment of performance are fundamental elements of modern competency-based assessment and essential elements in the remediation of unsatisfactory performance (Diller & Phelps, 2008; Kimatian & Lloyd, 2008).

Aim of This Paper

Although the use of paper as well as ePortfolios to assess the clinical competence of nurses, midwives, health visitors, and other health care professionals is now common practice across the UK (Rane-Szostack & Robertson, 1996; Sorrell et al., 1997), it is unclear to what extent they provide educators and employers with real insight into practitioners’ clinical competence (Finlay, Maughan, & Webster, 1998). Therefore, this paper evaluates the efficacy of the Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN)

competency-based ePortfolio as a platform for students to demonstrate achievement of the SCPHN Standards of Proficiency as they transform from Novices to Proficient professionals.

The Bucks Specialist Community Public Health Nursing (SCPHN) Course

The Bucks SCPHN Program is approved by the Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC), the independent professional regulator for nurses and midwives in the UK. The one-year program prepares competent NMC Registered Nurses (RNs) and Midwives for the SCPHN Qualification evidenced by the achievement of the Standards of Proficiency (SoP) for Specialist Community Public Health Nurses. SCPHN Nurses work in the community and may be required to make decisions on their community's behalf (NMC, 2004). This means that working in the community requires specialist knowledge, skills, and behaviors that are distinct from working in the hospital setting. The SCPHN Program also incorporates learning and development tasks that enable students to apply the three elements of the triangle of success: knowledge, skills, and attitude (Figure 1).

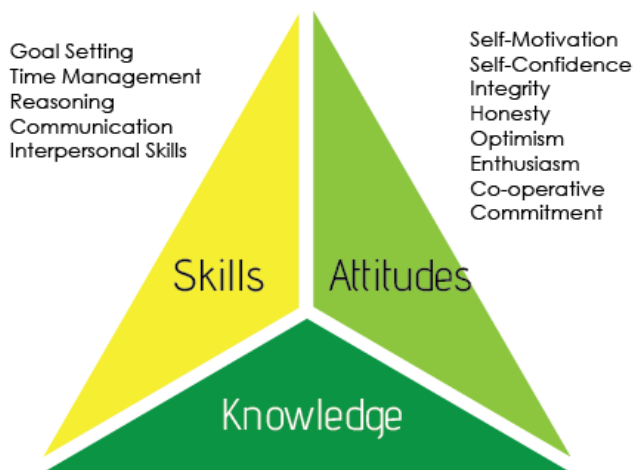


Figure 1. Adaptation of the Triangle of Success.

The Bucks' SCPHN Program comprises 50% practice and 50% theory with the practical and theoretical learning transferable to different settings, clients, and areas of practice, addressing the common principles of community public health (Table 1).

Structure – Semester One (September - December)

Monday & Tuesday in University
Wednesday & Thursday in practice
Friday independent study day

Structure – Semester Two (January - August)

Monday & Tuesday in practice
Wednesday & Thursday in University
Friday independent study day

Table 1. Structure of the course.

During the program, student Health Visitors (HVs) and School Nurses (SNs) collaborate with their Practice Teachers (PTs) responsible for promoting and developing the students' professional role, knowledge, and assessment of their proficiency to practice through a three-stage program of learning: observation, supported practice, and supervision. The goal is for student HVs and SNs to demonstrate competence in three domains: Search for Health Needs, Stimulation of Awareness of Health Needs, and Facilitation of Health-Enhancing Activities. The ePortfolio is the vehicle for students to:

1. record their development from Novice to Proficient HVs and SNs based on Benner's five-stage competency model measured against the SCPHN SoP,
2. demonstrate self-awareness of their strengths and limitations at each stage and develop an action plan to fill the gaps as formative assessment,
3. demonstrate their reflective practice, and
4. demonstrate attainment of Proficient competency at the end of the course through summative assessment.

Embedding the ePortfolio in the SCPHN curriculum also demonstrates the course team's recognition that incorporating technology into the learning environment improves the student's transition into clinical practice (Giddens, Lauzon-Clabo, Jeffries, McQuade-Jones, & Ryan, 2014).

The Specialist Community Public Health Nursing Competency ePortfolio

Competency-based assessment is a well-established feature of ePortfolio use in the health professions (Tetzlaff, 2009). Therefore, the SCPHN ePortfolio is a competency-based ePortfolio used in conjunction with the SCPHN curriculum to provide for appropriate assessment of clinical performance. Since 2012, there have been six cohorts using Google Sites to develop competency ePortfolios. A web-based application such as Google Sites, when used as an ePortfolio, has been described in the literature as an innovative evaluation tool for competency assessment (Carraccio & Englander, 2010).

The SCPHN ePortfolio can be described as a “spinal column” (Figure 2) approach to developing placement portfolios as conceptualized by Webb et al. (2002, p. 897); they are structured around practice competencies or learning outcomes with evidence demonstrating how each competence has been met. Unlike the other models, i.e., the “shopping trolley” and the “toast rack” ePortfolios, the “spinal column” ePortfolio promotes the demonstration of explicit evidence of learning and competence through students’ reflections on the evidence of competence.



Figure 2. Spinal column structure of the SCPHN ePortfolio.

Therefore, the SCPHN ePortfolio is a dynamic record of learning comprising a purposeful collection of evidence demonstrating students’ learning journeys and their changing abilities over time (Butler et al., 2006) (Figure 3).

It can be typified as a:

- “developmental,” “learning,” or “process” ePortfolio (Oermann, 2002) as it is a collection of work showing a learning journey;
- “showcase portfolio” as it shows achievements, both at study and in practice; and
- “assessment portfolio” prepared specifically for assessment or evaluative purposes (Abrami & Barrett, 2005; Zeichner & Wray, 2001).

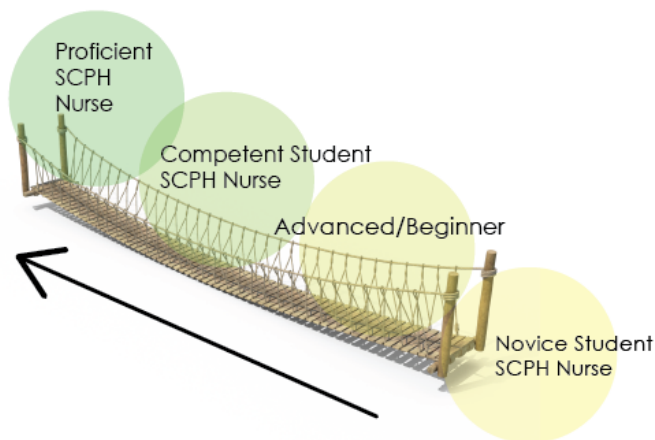


Figure 3. The SCPHN ePortfolio bridge showing the stages of an SCPHN student’s journey.

Growth and Development Towards Professionalism on the SCPHN ePortfolio Bridge: Findings and Discussion

The findings are presented according to the content of the SCPHN ePortfolio to evaluate its efficacy in promoting learning through analysis and evaluation of diverse experiences as the students are transformed from Novice to Proficient HVs or SNs.

Content of SCPHN ePortfolio

All SCPHN participants from 2013 - 2018 successfully created ePortfolios and documented evidence of growth and development on their journey from Novice to Proficient Specialist Community Public Health Nurses; this demonstrated their achievement of the program learning outcomes mapped to the NMC

SoPs. SCPHN students present examples of their work, as well as their reflective statements, which demonstrate the value of their work examples and demonstrate their professional growth and development from Novice to Proficient HVs and SNs. Their self-reflections are based on the analysis and synthesis of thought and action, encouraging active involvement and a sense of ownership in the development of the ePortfolio and of their own learning.

The Checklist (Figure 4) included in each ePortfolio shows that students assume ownership of their ePortfolios, are accountable for their claims contained within, and take responsibility for their own learning (Paulson, Paulson, & Meyer, 1991; Wenzel, Briggs, & Puryear, 1998) by cross-referencing them to their own activity logs and assessments.

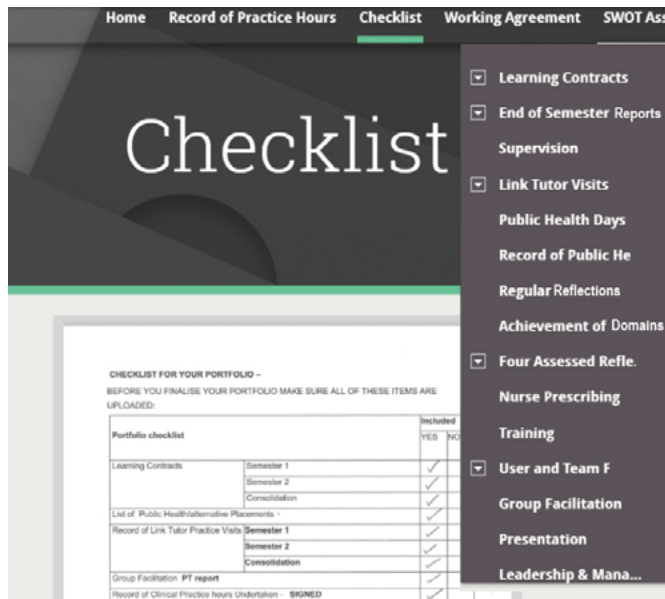


Figure 4. View of student SCPHN ePortfolio with Checklist page and Menu of Contents.

The Checklist resembles a template for students to structure the presentation of evidence and to organize artifacts which helps to streamline the assessment process and to limit excessive evidence collection, a benefit afforded by the ePortfolio (Australian Flexible Learning Framework [ALFL], 2009). It highlights the systematic and organizational aspects of the ePortfolio which are characteristics of online portfolios

(Campbell, Cignetti, Melenyzer, Nettles, & Wyman, 2006). The completeness of evidence rather than convergence is also ensured by the spinal column type ePortfolio.

Structure of the SCPHN ePortfolio

The affordance of the spinal column type structure of the SCPHN ePortfolio is that all entries on every page of the ePortfolio provide evidence to demonstrate the students' incremental growth and development from Novice to Proficient professionals (Benner, 1984). Further, the SCPHN ePortfolio acts as a platform for learning with "opportunities for students to make connections among coursework, extracurricular involvement, and placement experiences" (Chen & Black, 2010, p. 1) promoting the crossing of contexts and making connections beyond the classroom and formal academic environment (Johnsen, 2012) while engendering deep and meaningful learning (Tiwari & Tang, 2003). Clearly, the landscape on the bridge changes as the students travel from the Novice to Proficient stages during the learning journey. The student SCPHNs' journey along the ePortfolio bridge portrays "a dynamic record of growth and professional change" (Price, 1994, p.35) presented in their own voice.

Reflections in the SCPHN ePortfolio

As a Novice HV or SN, students first conduct the SWOT Assessment to critically self-evaluate their strengths and limitations. This leads to learning how to set goals and create a plan to achieve them. Titchen (2003) describes self-assessment as a form of reflective practice which is highly personal and is designed to help students continue their learning journey while Olin and Sullivan (2004) argue that it also helps students to better understand the learning goals and take greater responsibility for their own learning. As such, the PT uses students' accounts to facilitate a growing insight into self- and professional practice. As Knieper (2002) explains, the PT can help students to understand not only what happened but also what they learned about their knowledge, skills, and attitudes (Table 1). Thus,

Assessment Reports:

PT and student to discuss and score progress at the end of each semester:

Score: AT THIS STAGE OF THE COURSE:

0 = Making little progress (THIS REQUIRES AN ACTION PLAN)

1 = Requiring improvement

2 = Developing some understanding

3 = Making good progress

4 = Making excellent progress

	Semester One	Semester Two
Knowledge	<p>Student's comments and score</p> <p>"I feel I have made good progress in all of these fields (Figure 2). I am aware of the National and local policies especially for safeguarding. I have completed my community health profile which has enabled me to help assess the needs of the community and assisted in screening at a local primary school." (Score 3)</p> <p>PT's comments and score</p> <p>"Student is becoming aware of the policies regarding SN and is exploring her contribution to them and the impact they have on the wider school community. Student SN's reflection on the completed community profile has given Student SN new skills in health surveillance and assessment. Student SN's participation in the National Screening Program giving her a better understanding of the national policies driving this work." (Score 3)</p>	<p>Student's comments and score</p> <p>"I am now more confident in performing in a safeguarding environment as I performed well in the Safeguarding exam. It demonstrates I can apply national, local and NHS Trust policies to my practice. I can now competently complete health assessments independently." (Score 4)</p> <p>PT's comments and score</p> <p>"Student's knowledge about child protection issues and related risks has developed which has boosted her confidence in working with vulnerable groups due to her insight into her awareness of the risks." (Score 4)</p>
Skills	<p>Student's comments and score</p> <p>"I have been working towards a balance between my theoretical and practice work and despite the challenges I am pleased that I am making progress. My communication skills are improving but I need to improve in some areas especially in 1:1 sessions with students." (Score 3)</p> <p>PT's comments and score</p> <p>"Communication with young people has been a challenge but Student SN has grown in confidence in communicating with this client group... Student has demonstrated the ability to practice independently and the importance of accurate, timely record keeping. This is helping her to be more organized." (Score 4)</p>	<p>Student's comments and score</p> <p>"I continue to reflect in practice which enables me to not only question my practice but to offer suggestions and improve on areas that I feel there is need. For example, prioritizing my workload or improving delivery of teaching sessions. My communication skills have improved due to the drop-in sessions with young people school and conversations with other members of the multi-disciplinary team especially through conference and core group meetings." (Score 3)</p> <p>PT's comments and score</p> <p>"Student is now writing child protection reports and looked after children health assessments independently but needs to ensure that she pays attention to the finer details and include all information relation to the child." (Score 3)</p>
Attitudes	<p>Student's comments and score</p> <p>"I have developed good working relationships with other professionals and with families especially vulnerable families which has required my communication skills to be improved. Attending core group meetings has made me confident in working independently and maintained my professionalism according to the NMC code of conduct." (Score 3)</p> <p>PT's comments and score</p> <p>"Student has demonstrated empathy and confidence when dealing with clients, sensitivity to the diverse community in a school setting. Student SN is aware that learning has no limits and is always pushing herself and creating opportunities to acquire new knowledge and skills." (Score 4)</p>	<p>Student's comments and score</p> <p>"Whilst being aware of confidential and consent issues, it may be necessary that I have to act as an advocate for a child/young person in particular during child protection conferences." (Score 3)</p> <p>PT's comments and score</p> <p>"Student understands issues of equity and is developing and awareness of ethics issues." (Score 4)</p>

Table 2. Assessment of Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes.

ePortfolio use facilitates students assuming more responsibility for their learning (Hillyer & Ley, 1996).

Students record their felt experiences in the Regular Reflections (Figure 4) at the time they occur, and they are then analyzed and evaluated at a later time, thus promoting learning (Boud & Walker, 1998). The narratives usually document the students' stage on the Novice to Expert model and emphasize the acquisition of professional competencies through reflection on selected experiences. Students revisit their practice experiences where they have contributed ideas or actions that may have influenced the outcome of care given (Cotton, 2001) and analyze the situation and their involvement in it and identify improvements or changes that can impact future performance as a solo activity as shown in the quote below.

Reflecting on the situation I considered various explanations for the mother's lack of emotional warmth on the day of the review...My initial feeling was that Lisa's mother's parenting style lent towards authoritarian. This theory categorizes parenting styles according to their levels of demandingness and responsiveness into four groups: authoritarian, authoritative, permissive or neglectful (Baumrind, 1967)... What happened could have been influenced by my experience with the previous client who was very animated in communicating. Another potential problem is the projection of one's own feelings, about the situation or client. While reflecting on Lisa and her mother I wondered if she had unrealistic expectations of Lisa and was now feeling disappointed. This led me to consider if my interpretation could be influenced by how I might feel in her circumstances" (student HV).

These narratives generally form the basis of the reflections for the "Achievement of SoP Principles and Domains" (Table 3).

Domain A	Search for Health Needs Reflection on Practice-New Birth Visit
Domain B	Stimulation of Awareness of Health Needs Standards of Proficiency
Domain C	Influence on Policies Affecting Health Enabling Effective Community Development
Domain D	Facilitation of Health Enhancing Activities
Reflections	Reflection on Public Health Placements
	Reflection on Alternative Experience
	Reflection on Nurse Prescribing

Table 3. Achievement of Standards of Proficiency Principles and Domains.

The SoP reflections show the process of individual transformations on the ePortfolio bridge as each student attempts to make meaning from their experiences. This experiential learning is therefore individualistic and underpinned by constructivist theory which is learner-centered (Stefani, Mason, & Pegler, 2007). There is evidence of students' attempts to triangulate each practice experience with theory, past experience, and research. These reflections also demonstrate students' critical and analytical abilities as well as the connection to relevant policies, guidelines, models, and frameworks. Each SoP domain (A, B, C, & D) is hyperlinked to assessed reflections on various areas of practice as shown in the ePortfolio menu (Figure 4). One of the basic functions of hyperlinks, a functionality afforded by the Web 2.0 technology, is to enable readers to move from one page to another. Moreover, the competence to create hyperlinks within the ePortfolio in itself is a technological achievement for students.

Although the process of reflection originates as a solo activity, it becomes social through a feedback loop as the PTs comment on the students' reflections. Table 1 is evidence that discussion and dialogue between student SCPHNs and PTs

are deemed crucial for learning and development. Moreover, as the narrative below shows, the dialogues occur in a wider context involving other professionals who are involved in the experience. This reveals that SCPHN students are members of a Community of Practice, a group of people who share a concern or a passion for something they do and learn how to do it better as they interact regularly (Lave & Wenger, 1991).

Following the group reflection, with experienced SCPHNs, it was decided that . . . as speculation and assumptions have no place in the write up of an assessment it is important to gain an understanding of what is going on in the relationship. This is best done by. . .
(student SN).

Dialogues with the PTs and the professionals mentioned above are organized reflections that enable students to not only learn from their experiences but also help to identify the need for specific learning before further experience is required (Boud, Keogh, & Walker, 1985) to move from Novice to Expert professional. Clearly, the SCPHN ePortfolio bridge is a discursive space underpinned by social constructivism (Vygotsky, 1978), which proposes that knowledge is constructed through dialogue and interactions with others, i.e. the students analyze experiences and illustrate growth within the context of SCPHN SoPs. According to Britzman (2003), this discursive space connects what students can do and what is possible for them in practice, which Yancy (2009) explains as the temporal connections from past to present to future and relationship connections as the quote below shows.

This past year has been filled with both highs and lows. The academic work has been intense and at times challenging Practice placement has been a steep learning curve I feel that I have grown both personally and professionally. I have had the pleasure of both having a knowledgeable and supportive community practice teacher and of meeting a variety of interesting and welcoming colleagues, who have motivated

me when I was struggling with the course requirements and commitments. (student HV at end of course)

These connections highlight the process-orientated role of the ePortfolio in personal and professional growth through connections with theory, with PTs, and with themselves. In Brown's (1995) words, "it is a collection of evidence, which demonstrates the continuing acquisition of skills, knowledge, attitudes, understanding and achievements. It is both retrospective and prospective, as well as reflecting the current stage of development and activity of the individual" (p. 3). The SCPHN ePortfolio, therefore, attests to a student's achievement and personal and professional development by providing critical analysis of the journey to professionalism.

Employed as a pedagogical approach for deep and meaningful learning that extends beyond the classroom rather than just as a technological tool, the SCPHN ePortfolio enables documenting and integrating deep learning, as well as developing lifelong, self-reflective learners (Matthews-DeNatale, 2014). It can be visualised as a "process of reflecting on the growth of one's knowledge and capabilities over time with an emphasis on providing structured time and space for learners to consider and document the process of their learning and not just the product" (Light, Chen, & Ittleson, 2012, p. 11).

Nurse educators who are exploring the potential of ePortfolios as a valuable tool to facilitate the integration of theory and practice in the process of preparing competent nurses (Hopkins, 2006; McCready, 2007; Karsten, 2012) have the answer in the SCPHN ePortfolio. The ePortfolio is a virtual space where students can present a compilation of their work, reflect, and demonstrate clinical competence that bridges the theoretical knowledge they gain on campus with the practical knowledge they gain during placements (McCready, 2007). Students can construct meaning from this exercise, both in respect to personal and professional growth, and through linking theory and practice (Coffey, 2005; Duncan-Pitt & Sutherland, 2006).

The findings can be summarized as follows:

1. Student self-belief: Their behavior and approach to learning during the course will transform them from Novice to Proficient Specialist Community Nurses in the workplace.
2. Student ownership of learning: Personalized, individualized approaches to choice of content, process, and self-assessment of that learning.
3. Student accountability: Students demonstrate awareness of the impact of their decisions, actions on the thinking, behavior, or decisions of others—and vice versa.
4. Student voice: Reflections on the SoP in the ePortfolio are students' engaged and authentic ways of voicing their learning.
5. Pedagogy that is learner-centric: Student involvement in the entire process of ePortfolio development.

In Yancey's (2001) words, the SCPHN ePortfolio brings together "visibility, process and reflection as students chart and interpret their own learning" (p.19). Students take responsibility for explaining their actions and for self-assessment identifying their strengths and weaknesses as they transform from Novices to Advanced Beginners to Competent and finally to Proficient professionals. Moreover, they evaluate their performances and demonstrate that learning is making meaning by connecting academic, personal, and professional knowledge both on and away from campus using dialogue and discussion to plan and set goals for future learning.

Therefore, as Murray et al. (2006) confirm the SCPHN ePortfolio presents students' own selection of evidence linked to competence and knowledge acquisition while encouraging reflective learning (Joyce, 2005) and promotes personal and professional development planning (Challis, 1999) through connections. The SCPHN ePortfolio validates the perception that it is a virtual space which shows authentic, professional growth associated with practices and outcomes over time (Abrami & Barret, 2005).

Conclusion and Next Steps

This paper has discussed how the SCPHN ePortfolio, used incrementally from the students' entry point to their gaining registration with the NMC as professional Health Visitors and School Nurses, is an innovative and effective vehicle for students not only to display practice experiences and acquisition of knowledge and skills but also to demonstrate their application in practice to demonstrate clinical competence. It highlights how the ePortfolio's spinal column type structure helps students connect not only theoretical learning with practice but also with professional networks including their PTs and course teams while focusing on the professional Standards of Proficiency to achieve registration. It is the discursive space that affords students the opportunity to analyze and illustrate growth within the discourse and standards of the community of professionals. The SCPHN ePortfolio is, therefore, "the product, created by the learner, containing a collection of digital artefacts articulating experiences, achievements and learning" (JISC, 2008, p.6) as well as reflections, feedback, etc., which presents a selected audience with evidence of an individual's learning and/or ability (Sutherland & Powell, 2007). The scaffolded process approach appears to be an effective way for PTs and course teams to identify students' needs in a timely manner, which could be one reason for the high success rates of the course.

Moreover, the newly qualified and NMC registered Health Visitors and School Nurses can continue to use ePortfolios to document their journey from proficient to expert professionals, thus supporting life-wide and lifelong learning. The knowledge, skills, and attitudes towards technology to evidence learning is value-added to their profession as it becomes an asset to their role as PTs themselves.

Looking forward, although the spinal column ePortfolio is fit for the purpose of competency-based assessment, the cake mix would be more suitable for **re-validating** (NMC, 2019) the professional status with the NMC. There is integration or blending of the parts—the separate ingredients—to form a whole ePortfolio cake. Users are expected to

provide evidence to demonstrate that they have achieved the objectives of revalidation through reflective commentaries addressing analytical criteria. In short, whilst there is a collection of individual ingredients, the product at the end of the process is more than the sum of the parts. The course team intends to incorporate this in future courses to prepare the SCPHN students for the future.

About Authors



Barbara Nicolls is a Senior Lecturer at the Learning Development Unit at Buckinghamshire New University. Barbara's dissertation on the role of academic staff in ensuring effective eportfolio development and implementation was the start of her journey leading eportfolio embedding in a variety of curricula. She has showcased student outcomes at international eportfolio conferences and in publications.

A Bucks Fellow 2015, Barbara is also a Senior Fellow of the Higher Education Academic and National Teaching Fellow 2018 acknowledging her outstanding impact on student outcomes and the teaching profession in higher education.



Dr. Jane Wright is the leader for Community courses at Buckinghamshire New University. These programmes include School Nurses, District Nurses, Health Visitors, and Community Children's Nurses. Jane's doctorate in Public Health examines the drinking behavior of undergraduate students. Jane is also a Joint Consultant Editor for the British Journal of School Nursing.

Jane has been working with Barbara Nicolls on building an ePortfolio for the Community Nurses since 2012 as she believes in the role of technology in enhancing reflection and lifelong learning. More specifically, she has a keen interest in ensuring that students are fit for specialist practice and are able to apply learning to the practice setting.

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