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Title: Shaping Conversations Nurse lecturers' emotional Management in Higher education: Implications for future nursing practitioners

Background

Ever changing governmental and educational policy reforms in higher education and nursing per se has placed great emphasis on the benefits of consumerism, efficiency and marketisation for the economy and the enhancement of students' experience (Barrett & Barrett 2007, Allen 2003). Consequently, there has been significant change in the role expectation of the lecturers' working within higher education (Carr 2007, Bryson 2004).

To date the majority of research in this area has focussed on the students perspectives as to the impact of such changes. Notably less research studies has focussed on the front – line workers i.e. the lecturers' who have also had to accommodate and integrate such changes into their working lives. This disparity became the impetus for this practitioner study.

Method

Adopting a Gadamerian theoretical perspective, which utilised 'participative conversations' as the mode for enquiry; facilitated the exploration of nurse lecturers' 'Lived experiences' of working life in higher education

Results

The study findings highlighted, that policy changes with increased expectations on nurse lecturer's to be more 'student centred'; cognisant of holistic needs, whether educational, physical, emotional, social; whilst balancing being 'consumer mindful' research active and entrepreneurial in their engagement with workplace activity ; came at a price. The lecturers' revealed that in negotiating the different competing demands made on their time they were making major emotional investment in their work, which over time impacted adversely upon their emotional wellbeing.

Research Implications for nurse lecturer's professional practice & Nursing Practice

The implication for practice lies in the endeavour to empower nurse lecturers', to negotiate strategies, which will, enhance their ability to work efficiently and effectively with emotional and relational matters in Higher education environments. The prospect being, that through considering their emotional and relational needs, that mutual benefits gained would serve to enhance the experience of all who work, learn and procure the services of higher education organisations .

This study proposes that it is essential that higher educational organisations are not only mindful of the emotional labour and consequence of policy change but that appropriate support and training for front line workers is made available. Not only will this equip the workforce with the needed relational skills to enhance working effectively with diverse population of nursing student and numerous stakeholder holders. More importantly, is that these transferable skills can be employed in the teaching of interpersonal and relational matters within the classroom. Which given the professional destination of nursing students and the curriculum whose principal values focus on care, compassion, competence, courage, communication and commitment (DOH 2013) can only serve to produce and enhance the quality of nursing care that will be delivered at the bedside.

References

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Biography

Dr Eula Miller currently works as Senior Lecturer in pre – registration Nursing. Both Adult Nurse and Mental health Nurse trained.