

Modern concepts of skill and their application to nursing and lifelong learning

Dr Cathy Doggett, Mrs Sue Bernhauser

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A key goal of nursing education must be the preparation of well educated registered nurses to meet global workforce needs with the capacity to make scientifically sound contributions to health outcomes for recipients of nursing care through provision of quality care (Daly, Macleod Clark, Lancaster, Badnash, Orchard 2008), however, as shown in this paper, appropriate skills acquisition is essential if that goal is to be achieved. Skills are particularly relevant to nursing which has levels of embedded skills and sub skills (Doggett 2004). This paper addresses the development of the skills required by the nurse of today and tomorrow, looking at the current skills agenda, exploring this from both a national and local perspective, linking this to the approach that one university and its partners in healthcare practice have developed.

In the first instance the current skills agenda is analysed along with national policy, including aspects of the current review of nursing in the UK, and local practice. Linked to this is an exploration of the key modern concepts of skilled action and capability and their application through one skills development model. This model incorporates both simulated learning in a skills laboratory, now condoned by the Nursing and Midwifery Council in the UK (NMC 2007) and known to be valued by students as an opportunity to practice activities in a safe environment prior to planned clinical experiences (Reilly and Spratt 2007), where exposure to the reality of professional practice and its integration of explicit with tacit knowledge is invaluable in producing skilled clinicians (Dickson, Walker and Bourgeois 2006), not only for pre qualifying students but also post qualifying nurses.

The audience will have the opportunity to engage with the speakers and judge for themselves the benefits of this model, in providing structure to skill development and the opportunity for meaningful lifelong learning.