

Editorial: Supporting the Development of Practice-based Learning: The Role of a National Educators Association

*John Hammond^a, Vince Clarke^b & Nita Muir^c

a: Canterbury Christ Church University, United Kingdom; b: University of Hertfordshire, United Kingdom; c: University of Chichester, United Kingdom

We write this editorial as recently appointed co-chairs of the National Association of Educators in/for Practice (NAEP) in the United Kingdom (UK). Internationally, there are significant challenges in delivering high quality health and social care education in higher education, due to cost of living pressures and reducing student numbers that have an impact on university resources. These challenges are enhanced with the interdependency of training and education, which relies on health and social care providers who contribute up to 50% of profession-related learning opportunities for future health and social care professionals. Educators from all professions and areas are required to work collaboratively to maintain and strengthen partnerships, which support the professional learning and experience of students (Muir, 2023). In the UK, the National Health Service (NHS) long term workforce plan (NHS, 2023) indicates a new vision for the healthcare workforce and a sustained approach for patient safety, person-centred and compassionate care experiences which meet the local needs of populations (Fraher & Brandt, 2019). Similarly, the Skills for Care's (2024) workforce strategy for adult social care in England mirrors many of the NHS long-term workforce plan recommendations. These reflect global population, and workforce demands, and health and social care roles that will need to evolve to respond.

With such changes, there is opportunity for a new discourse about education and educators in practice. The ivory towers of higher education institutions being the 'best place' for educators and education of health and social care professions has been a hegemonic discourse for many decades worldwide. This has inadvertently created educational binaries of practically-applied/evidence-informed, inferior/superior and basic/high quality. There are concerns that this leads to social exclusion and inequality of opportunity as many health and social professions strive for higher levels of pre-registration qualifications (Dickerson & Trujillo, 2009). However, recent policy changes in the UK are enabling a shift in this discourse. First, pre-registration qualifications are becoming increasingly diverse with a growth in apprenticeship and associate routes to health and social care professions (NHS, 2023) which rely on partnerships to succeed. Second, the four pillars of practice introduced as part of a framework for advanced practice (Health Education England, 2017) is now an embedded rhetoric, and education/learning in practice is beginning to

*Corresponding Author: Prof John Hammond, Professor of Interprofessional Practice, School of Allied Health Professionals, Public Health and Social Work, Canterbury Christ Church University, UK.

Email: john.hammond@canterbury.ac.uk

Journal URL: <https://publications.coventry.ac.uk/index.php/pblh>

Hammond, J., Clarke, V., & Muir, N. (2024). Editorial: Supporting the Development of Practice-based Learning: The Role of a National Educators Association. *International Journal of Practice-based Learning in Health and Social Care*, 12(2), ii-iv. <https://doi.org/10.18552/ijpblhsc.v12i2.1208>



© 2024 John Hammond, Vince Clarke, & Nita Muir. This Open Access article is distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution Attribution-Non-Commercial No Derivatives 4.0 International License (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>), which permits unrestricted non-commercial use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided the original work is properly cited and is unaltered.

have equivalent footing to the clinical, research and leadership pillars. More recently, the development of career frameworks for educators such as the Allied Health Professions ([Council of Deans of Health, 2024](#)), has helped to position education and educators as an essential ‘thread’ of practice and something to celebrate.

Another shift is in co-production of teaching and learning, where emphasis is centred on learner experience and social constructivist ways of knowing. Students and other key stakeholders are actively involved in participatory approaches for learning design ([O’Connor et al., 2021](#)). These approaches enable more distributed responsibility for learner development across all areas of practice. There is also opportunity to re-emphasise interprofessional learning, which can bridge campus and community, and facilitate person-centred collaborative practice to meet local needs and frame new models of care ([Gilbert et al., 2023](#)). Finally, in the face of growing complexities in health and social care, evidence demonstrates that learning enables individuals to thrive ([Younie, 2021](#)). This is not only for the learner, but creative approaches to curriculum can provide opportunities for educators to also flourish (*ibid*).

Therefore, it is essential that there is a community of practice for all health and social care educators from a variety of contexts to discuss these challenges and share practice. Established in 2012 in the UK, NAEP provides the space for this nexus of practice across the health and care delivery and educational contexts rather than the disciplinary boundaries of the professions. NAEP aims to support the health and social care workforce so that individual practitioners fully understand the value of education for learners, patients/service users, carers and other practitioners. Members of NAEP have been working towards this aim for over a decade, sharing experiences and supporting innovative developments across varied settings.

The Executive Committee boasts members from a wide range of professions, and as co-chairs, we represent nursing, physiotherapy and paramedics, embodying the principles of inter-professional collaboration for the benefit of learners and ultimately, service users. The Association’s mission is to ensure that practice-based learning is evidence informed. One way to do this is to bring educators together to celebrate and share the evaluation and research of practice education developments through our annual conference. NAEP has a long-established relationship with the *International Journal of Practice-based Learning in Health and Social Care* and recognises the importance of disseminating evidence across the professions and internationally.

This leads to NAEP’s next conference on 7th March 2025, which will provide the opportunity to share practice-based learning research, and we encourage abstract submissions via our website [The National Association of Educators in Practice](#). Our keynote speaker is Louise Younie, who will share her research and experience with creative enquiry methodologies in education for humanising medicine, professional identity formation and human flourishing. While we are primarily UK-based, NAEP are exploring opportunities to look and work more globally and therefore we invite international colleagues to get in touch to collaborate about education in/for practice.

References

- Council of Deans of Health. (2024). *AHP Educator Career Framework*.
<https://www.councilofdeans.org.uk/ahp-framework/>
- Dickerson, A., & Trujillo, L. (2009). Practitioners’ perceptions of the occupational therapy clinical doctorate. *Journal of Allied Health, 38*(2), e47–53.
- Fraher, E., & Brandt, B. (2019). Toward a system where workforce planning and interprofessional practice and education are designed around patients and populations not professions. *Journal of Interprofessional Care, 33*(4), 389–397. <https://doi.org/10.1080/13561820.2018.1564252>
- Gilbert, J. H. V., Girard, M-A., Grymonpre, R. E., Mahler, C., & Maxwell, B. (2023). The Applicability of Interprofessional Education for Collaborative People-centered Practice and Care to Health

- Plans and Workforce Issues: A Thematic Global Case Review. *Education for Health*, 36(2), 67–75. https://doi.org/10.4103/efh.efh_459_21
- Health Education England. (2017). *Multi-professional framework for advanced practice in England*. <https://advanced-practice.hee.nhs.uk/multi-professional-framework-for-advanced-practice/>
- Muir, N. (2023). Building a sustainable healthcare workforce through innovative social partnerships. *British Journal of Healthcare Management*, 29(7), 159–161. <https://doi.org/10.12968/bjhc.2023.0050>
- National Health Service. (2023). *NHS Long Term Workforce Plan*. <https://www.england.nhs.uk/publication/nhs-long-term-workforce-plan/>
- O'Connor, S., Zhang, M., Trout, K. K., & Snibsoer, A. K. (2021). Co-production in nursing and midwifery education: A systematic review of the literature. *Nurse Education Today*, 102, Article 104900. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.nedt.2021.104900>
- Skills for Care. (2024). *A workforce strategy for Adult Social Care in England*. <https://www.skillsforcare.org.uk/Workforce-Strategy/Home.aspx>
- Younie, L. (2021). Flourishing through creative enquiry: humanising the medical experience. *Journal of Holistic Healthcare*, 18(1), 3-5. <https://bhma.org/flourishing-through-creative-enquiry-humanising-the-medical-experience/>