

## Book Review

**Augmenting Health and Social Care Students' Clinical Learning Experiences: Outcomes and Processes**, by Stephen Billett, Jennifer Newton, Gary Rogers, Christy Noble (Eds.), Springer, 2019, ISBN 978-3-030-05559-2 (Hardback) ISBN 978-3-030-05560-8 ([eBook](#))

Higher education healthcare programs have had a strong and continuing interest in how to ensure clinical placements are appropriately integrated to support professional capabilities and employability. This recent addition to Springer's *Professional and Practice-based Learning* series makes an important contribution to addressing this concern. Here the focus is on pedagogical strategies that can be implemented in program after a clinical placement for enriching and transforming students' learning experiences. It is the outcome of a three year project (2015-18) funded by the Australian government to identify how educational interventions can augment students' practicum experiences to foster their professional capacities. This comprehensive volume includes a rich combination of theoretical argument and twelve detailed case studies describing the educational interventions trialed across a breadth of healthcare disciplines in five Australian universities and one industry provider.

The book is structured into four sections. Part I: *Augmenting Post-practicum Experiences*, presents key theoretical and empirical research underpinning the project. Part II: *Post practicum Curriculum and Pedagogies*, and Part III: *Processes of Feedback and Debriefing*, comprise the twelve case studies. Part IV: *Summaries and Syntheses: Towards Models of Effective Practice*, presents an overall distillation of themes across the case studies and a review of the project. The somewhat unwieldy titles that structure the volume and the lack of any introductory overview for each part, does provide an initial challenge in comfortably entering this text. For that reason, one needs to scan the book's *Preface* that outlines each chapter and then dip and delve into the valuable concepts and case studies across this volume that can support enriching practice-based learning in clinical education.

The first chapter in Part 1, by Stephen Billett who led the three year project, presents the central rationale underpinning the book. Billett argues that although it is recognized it is helpful to provide strategies prior to, during, and after placements to optimise the educational benefits of placement experiences, there has been insufficient attention to post-placement strategies. He draws on recent research to clearly state the case why traditional methods such as individual reflective journals are too limited, and why there is a need for structured educational interventions that provide opportunities for students to engage in collective sharing of placement experiences. He proposes this augmenting of clinical placements can support students in informing their occupational selection, capacity to perform in their occupation and in how to learn across their working lives.

The second chapter in Part I, provides an excellent accompaniment to the first. Here the focus moves to the findings from a survey that outlines the views of 365 higher education students in Australia who were undertaking work placements in health and social care programs to identify their preferences for post-practicum interventions. Detailed empirical data from the survey is presented, clearly grounding the

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book's argument by demonstrating the students' desire for productive educational strategies after their clinical placements including the type and timing of those strategies. Nuanced differences between medical, midwifery, nursing, and allied health students in their preferences provokes interesting implications on how best to determine post-practicum strategies for different disciplinary cohorts.

In Part II seven chapters are included, each a separate case study of a project trialing a post-placement innovation within their curriculum. The breadth of case studies spans clinical disciplines and pedagogical strategies from the more formal use of summative assessments through to facilitated small group discussions. Kirwan, Tuttle, Weeks, and Laakso, for example, detail pedagogical strategies in assisting physiotherapy students translate their placement experiences for planning their careers and future employability. In the chapter by Grealish, Armit, van de Mortel, Billett, Shaw, Frommolt, Mitchell, and Mitchell, the innovative use of concept mapping as a reflective tool is detailed. The case study presents a pilot within a tertiary hospital where nursing students came together in facilitated learning circles to share their placement experiences and, through iterative use of concept mapping as a key reflective tool, built their practice knowledge.

Part III offers another five case study chapters where the focus is on feedback and debriefing strategies after a clinical placement. Cardell and Bialocerkowski, for example, describe a post-practicum debriefing workshop for postgraduate speech pathology students that drew on their placement experiences for developing professional identity, self-efficacy and resilience. In their chapter, Newton and Butler outline a novel approach using digital storytelling as a debriefing strategy. On completion of their community health placement, postgraduate nursing students each produced a reflective video on their perceptions of becoming a community nurse and shared these in an online space with their cohort. This chapter presents an interesting and largely positive example of the innovative possibilities in taking up placement debriefing strategies using new media tools for reflection while also identifying a few challenges in its implementation.

In the penultimate chapter in Part IV, Billett closely reviews the full set of case studies with the goal of identifying a set of principles and practices that can be used by higher education across different disciplines to support the effective use of post-practicum experiences. In undertaking the review, however, there is a missed opportunity as an almost over-zealous schematic analysis comparing specific issues in the twelve cases leads to a series of detailed tables across the chapter to the point that the similarities and differences between the projects becomes fragmented. Despite this drawback, there is a valuable concluding section where Billett sets out a few key important considerations for those seeking to augment clinical placements around how interventions might be best structured and facilitated.

The final chapter by Orrell comments on the challenges and significance of the overall project in implementing the learning initiatives after clinical placements. She discusses how the taking-up of the diverse innovative pilot projects required those involved to disrupt everyday practices, formulate new approaches, and maintain a strong network across the pilot sites for mutual learning. Orrell concludes that the significance of the project comes, not only from the learning generated from the twelve sites, but also from the implications for future practices. She argues this project now provides principles and examples that can be adapted and upscaled into new models of post-practicum learning in a range of academic programs. She is not alone in this view. The outcomes of the project, as outlined, can provide an important contribution for informing practice education in healthcare and potentially other disciplinary fields.

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