

Pre-registration Midwifery Education: Clinicians in the Classroom

Abstract

According to Nursing and Midwifery Council (NMC) Standards for Pre-registration Midwifery Education, programmes of study must have a practice to theory ratio no less than 50 per cent practice and no less than 40 per cent theory (NMC, 2008:19). The Standards go on to state that the programme must include a variety of teaching and learning strategies. Whilst 'the application of theory to midwifery practice in the academic learning environment must be undertaken by a midwife teacher' (NMC, 2008:19), it is good practice to complement this teaching with input from other experts such as service users, midwives and other members of the multi-disciplinary team. This series of articles will explore teaching by a range of healthcare professionals (such as a Consultant Anaesthetist; Consultant Midwife; Specialist Bereavement Midwife; Midwifery Matron), including their professional role and responsibilities; their motivations to teach; the topics they cover and how this input is evaluated by student midwives.

Keywords: theory-practice gap; pre-registration midwifery education; student midwives

Introduction

By 1996 midwifery pre-registration education in the United Kingdom (UK) was fully integrated into higher education, with successful completion of programmes of study affording student midwives both a theoretical and professional qualification. This move into higher education was perceived by some to distance theoretical input from clinical practice; a disconnect widely recognised as the 'theory-practice gap'. Whilst this phenomenon has been more widely debated in relation to nursing education, it is reasonable to consider it in the context midwifery education (for example Henderson, 2002; Dampier and Ford, 1997; Hewison, 1996; Upton, 1999).

Midwifery 2020: Delivering Expectations discussed the future direction of midwifery and the importance of ensuring student midwives are fully prepared to enter their chosen profession:

Professional midwifery education programmes require substantial academic, clinical and professional input from skilled educationalists and it is essential to protect and assure the quality of the student learning experience

(Chief Nursing Officers of England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales, 2010:19)

The midwifery team at the University of Northampton invites service users and a range of expert speakers into the classroom to contribute to their pre-registration curriculum to complement the theoretical element of the programme and bring expertise from the clinical area into the classroom. The following series of articles will examine this input from the perspective of the expert speakers: their professional role and responsibilities; their motivations to engage with pre-registration midwifery education and the topics covered. Articles will also include students' evaluation of the value of 'Clinicians in the Classroom' to their overall learning experience.

References

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