



## Exploring the transition from student to practitioner in diagnostic radiography



S. Naylor\*, C. Ferris, M. Burton

Sheffield Hallam University, United Kingdom

### ARTICLE INFO

#### Article history:

Received 27 May 2015

Received in revised form

11 September 2015

Accepted 19 September 2015

Available online 20 October 2015

#### Keywords:

Newly qualified

Transition

Professional identity

Clinical education

### ABSTRACT

**Introduction:** This study explores the expectations and experiences of newly qualified diagnostic radiographers during their transition into practice.

**Methods:** This was a longitudinal study using interpretative phenomenological analysis methodology. Data were gathered from four students who participated in a focus group. This informed semi structured interviews with a further eight students who were interviewed prior to starting work and three times over the following twelve months.

**Results:** Themes generated from the data included; experience, fitting in, and identity.

**Conclusion:** This study brings to light the experiences of newly qualified diagnostic radiographers. The findings are open to theoretical generalizability and raise issues that may be used by academic staff in the preparation of students and managers who support newly qualified staff members.

© 2015 The College of Radiographers. Published by Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

### Introduction

Despite changes to pre-registration education and the organisation of services, reality shock, on entering first-post practice remains an issue for healthcare professionals.<sup>1</sup> The transition from student to practitioner is at a decisive time for diagnostic radiographers as they embark on autonomous practice in a challenging environment and continue to develop their professional identity. The working environment for newly qualified diagnostic radiographers is unpredictable with an emphasis on high pressure, target driven practice where speed and efficiency may often conflict with patient care.<sup>2</sup> Year on year, newly qualified diagnostic radiographers have to contend with more and more as practice which was once considered “special”, is now recognised within the range of first post competencies.<sup>3</sup>

The pre-registration, undergraduate experience is a key time for the formation of healthcare students' professional identity as, during this period, they start to become socialised into their chosen profession. Professional socialisation is the process of acquiring specialist knowledge, skills, attitudes and values and through integration into a community of practice form a coherent identity of themselves as a professional within that community.<sup>4</sup> Freidson<sup>5</sup>

saw professionalism as an occupation that has control of its own work. This raises the issue of autonomy. There is a lack of functional autonomy when legislation necessitates adherence to routine and protocols which promotes a workplace culture of conformity and discourages creativity and flair.<sup>6</sup> This has impacted on the professional identity of diagnostic radiography. Liaschenko and Peter<sup>7</sup> suggested that while nursing meets many of the criteria for a profession, it does not have autonomy, and never will have the ability to control its own work. The radiography profession is in a similar situation to nurses in their relationship to the medical profession who generally maintain control over the work environment.<sup>8</sup> Diagnostic radiography is a profession with its history grounded in the use of technology, subservience to medicine and dedication to patient care, imaging service organisation and delivery.<sup>9</sup> Diagnostic radiography is seen to be struggling to emerge as a profession<sup>10</sup> and in many countries remains unrecognised as such.<sup>11,12</sup> Originally, training was undertaken in hospitals using an apprenticeship format with an emphasis on practical skill.<sup>13</sup> After considerable struggles, the move to an all graduate entry into the profession of diagnostic radiography was achieved in 1993. Although at the heart of modern medicine,<sup>14</sup> diagnostic radiography was the last major healthcare profession to achieve all graduate entry.<sup>15</sup>

Clinical education is an essential component of pre-registration education and training<sup>16</sup> however undergraduate clinical experience varies across higher education institutions.<sup>17</sup> For diagnostic

\* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: [Sarah.Naylor@shu.ac.uk](mailto:Sarah.Naylor@shu.ac.uk) (S. Naylor).

radiography students it is important for them to spend a sustained amount of time in the same clinical environment to support their professional socialisation and prepare them for autonomous practice. An aspect of professional socialisation for diagnostic radiographers is the support they get from each other by sharing experiences<sup>9</sup> and this cultural activity creates a potential learning environment where new staff are socialised into the relevant and diverse range of communities of practice and cultures. In addition to the challenges of change, high pressure and targets, the current economic climate frequently requires newly qualified staff to “hit the ground running”.<sup>18</sup> This paper examines the transition of student to practitioner in diagnostic radiography.

## Method

Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis (IPA) was used as a methodology for this study. It is concerned with a detailed examination of an individual's lived experience and how they make sense of that experience.<sup>19</sup> Researchers using IPA believe that there is a chain of connection between a person's experiences, how they talk about that experience, how they make sense of that experience and the emotional reaction to that experience.<sup>20</sup>

The source of data collection was via a focus group and in-depth, semi-structured interviews. It was a longitudinal study, which is common for research into transition.<sup>21–23</sup> The time period included pre and post-employment which was an approach used in previous research.<sup>24</sup> A focus group was chosen as the initial exploratory method in preference to using current literature to inform the semi-structured interviews due to the lack of literature specific to diagnostic radiography in this area. Focus groups are commonly used in qualitative research and use the interaction between participants to discover how they think or feel about a situation.<sup>25</sup> The semi-structured interviews were undertaken over a 12 month period which resulted in some attrition, but sufficient remained for the study. Interviews are a staple method of collecting data in qualitative research and there is a general belief that words are an adequate way to access and interpret the world.<sup>26</sup> A single trigger question of ‘How do you think you will feel during your first months working as a diagnostic radiographer?’ was used to initiate the discussion in the focus group. The emerging themes from the focus group and interviews were used to form a guide for subsequent data collection.

Volunteers were recruited into the study from a single cohort of 34 final year students undertaking BSc (Hons) Diagnostic Radiography. The undergraduate course that the participants completed was a three year course with blocks of experience in a clinical environment interspersed throughout the three years with academic sessions on the university campus. The students remained attached to one hospital for a year and went to a minimum of two hospitals within the three years. Of the eight participants recruited to the longitudinal study, seven were female and one male. This imbalance reflects the demographics of the profession. The participants were all in their twenties. All of the participants recruited for the interviews had some experience of working as students in the hospitals where they were being employed. Over the past few years 80%–90% of the students from the higher education institute from which the participants were recruited obtained employment in a hospital where they were placed as students.

At the request of participants, telephone interviews became the primary source of data in this study. Apart from one person telephone interviews were preferred for convenience as once employed participants were working many different shifts and extra hours, as well as having other social pressures on their time. All the interviews were recorded and professionally transcribed

verbatim in preparation for analysis. There is no one prescribed approach to the analysis of IPA. For this study the set of guidelines provided by Smith<sup>27</sup> were adopted and used by the first author.

In order to establish the credibility of this study different strategies have been utilised including member checking, peer-review, reflexivity and by providing a rich description of the participants' accounts. Before the final interview undertaken at 12 months the participants were presented with a provisional interpretation. A list containing a summary of themes was emailed to participants for their consideration prior to interview. Peer reviewers, who were colleagues or supervisors familiar with the research or phenomena being explored, were presented with highlights of the analysis. This process challenged the analysis, prompted discussion and provided a sounding board for ideas. This ensured that there was robustness to the emerging themes. Reflexivity was used in this study as a continual process of self-reflection on personal biases, preconceived notions and assumptions.<sup>28</sup> Using reflexivity as a thoughtful self-awareness during the research process can transform the problem of inter-subjectivity between the researcher and the researched into an opportunity to challenge and examine aspects of the research process.<sup>29</sup> It allows the researcher to examine the effects they have on the research process.<sup>30</sup>

The higher education institute granted ethical approval for this study. Informed consent was obtained and documented prior to data collection. Maintaining anonymity can be problematic. All names have been changed in order to preserve anonymity. However, it could be rightly assumed that the researcher will use their own academic establishment and hospitals which are conveniently located.<sup>31</sup> Thus consideration has been given to preserving anonymity during the writing of this paper which has influenced the amount of contextual detail provided about the hospitals and the participants.

The following results, which are illustrated by the participants' own words, have been obtained through voluntary participation. They are an integration of the findings of the focus group and interviews. Whilst the researcher being immersed in the data could have potentially influenced the findings this has been carefully managed and it is the lived experience of the participants which is illuminated in the following results. The study used a small, purposively selected group of participants. As such there is no intention of making broad generalisations from the findings of this research. Any claims made are bound within a relatively homogeneous sample. However, theoretical generalizability can be applied. The reader, using their existing professional and experiential knowledge, can consider the value of the research and its relevancy to their situation.

## Results

Analysis of the data produced themes of experience, fitting in, and identity which are presented below. A fourth theme, supporting the transition, was also generated. In order to present a comprehensive account of this extensive topic it is discussed in a separate article.<sup>32</sup> A schematic diagram of the themes can be seen in Fig. 1. As is common with IPA, the results are presented without reference to existing literature and separate to the discussion.<sup>33</sup>

### Experience

There was a general feeling of concern about working in areas where they lacked experience and a ‘fear of the unknown’ similar to that experienced by the participants of the focus group. This was particularly highlighted with regard to working out of normal working hours.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/2734678>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/2734678>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)