

## Approaches to Learning in the context of an outcomes-based curriculum

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### CITATION

Joyce, Pauline (2010): Approaches to Learning in the context of an outcomes-based curriculum. Royal College of Surgeons in Ireland. Poster. <https://doi.org/10.25419/rcsi.10780514.v2>

### DOI

[10.25419/rcsi.10780514.v2](https://doi.org/10.25419/rcsi.10780514.v2)

### LICENCE

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## Approaches to Learning in the context of an outcomes-based curriculum.



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## Research Question



- *How does an outcomes-based curriculum influence approaches to learning in an interprofessional postgraduate programme for healthcare professionals?*

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## Research Questions



- How do healthcare professionals, as students approach the experiences of learning?
- Do outcome statements drive student learning?
- Do outcome statements encourage or discourage direction of learning?
- Do outcome statements drive teacher activity, selection of content, selection of learning activities and assessment?
- What are the challenges to current understandings of student learning from the lecturers' perspectives?

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## Research Design



- **Evaluation Research**
  - Fourth Generation Evaluation, Constructivism.
- **Phenomenology - Husserl**
  - Change in direction following data collection and preliminary analysis.
  - Previous research on approaches to learning underpinned by Phenomenography and Survey approaches using inventories.

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## Main Theoretical/Conceptual Foundations



- Deep & Surface Learning
- Barnett *et al*'s (2001) conceptualisation of curriculum change around 3 domains of action, knowledge and self.
  - Barnett R, Perry G & Coate K (2001) Conceptualising curriculum change. *Teaching in Higher Education*. 6(4): 435-449.

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## Operationalisation of the study



- 1 group of interprofessional postgraduate students (n=11) – senior positions in organisations, demographics...
- Lecturers (n=4) – 2 full-time, 2 part-time.
- External Examiner
- One-to-one in-depth interviews
- Pilot - 2 interviews

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## Ethical Issues



- My Role
- Insider Researcher
- Importance of Gatekeeper
- Clarifications to participants
- Timing & Venues of interviews
  - Approval ~ 5 months

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## Data Collection & Analysis



- **Data Collection**
  - Interviews (Bracketing)
  - Documentary Analysis
  - Reflective diary
- **Data Analysis**
  - Giorgi's (1985) framework
  - Descriptions are based on experiences within the context of that experience.
    - Step 1 Getting a sense of the whole
    - Step 2 Discrimination of meaning units
    - Step 3 Transformation of the lived experience into psychological language
    - Step 4 Individual description of the situation
    - Step 5 The general description of the situated structures

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## Empirical Findings



### Students:

- Learning as Action
- Learning as Knowledge
- Learning as Personal & Professional Development

### Issues of note:

- The weighting on any one of these will depend on the *student's background from a professional perspective, years of experience, current practices in healthcare and motivation to develop their own careers and personal development.*

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## Empirical Findings



### Lecturers:

- Influence of own backgrounds and current status on their perspectives of student learning.
- Some lecturers challenging the learning outcomes and refining them, while others, were quite keen to use them as a reference check and guide.

### External Examiner

- Curriculum mapping
- Assessment – creativity, innovation, challenges, support.
- Students using their own individuality.
- Students applying learning to their own situations and linking back to evidence.

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## Major implications of the study



- **Academia**
  - Pluralistic evaluation (Students, Lecturers, External Examiner)
  - Postgraduate Interprofessional Sample
  - Contextual influences
- **Policy**
  - Influence of Curriculum Mapping
  - Transparency of Learning Outcomes
  - Evaluation method

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## Key Readings



- Ashworth P & Greasley K (2009) The phenomenology of 'approach to studying': the idiographic turn. *Studies in Higher Education* 34(5): 561-576.
- Entwistle N (1997) Reconstituting approaches to learning: a response to Webb. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 33(2): 213-218.
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- Sævið R (1997) Talk as data and practice – a critical look at phenomenographic inquiry and the appeal to experience. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 16(2): 173-190.
- Trigwell K & Prosser M (1997) Towards an understanding of individual acts of teaching and learning. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 16(2): 241-252.
- Webb G (1997) Deconstructing deep and surface: Towards a critique of phenomenography. *Higher Education Research and Development*, 33(2): 195-212.

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