

Qualitative and Reflective Analysis of Student Reflective Journals of Professional Placements in Radiation Therapy

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STATEMENT OF ORIGINALITY

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ACKNOWLEDGEMENT OF AUTHORSHIP

I hereby certify that this thesis is in the form of a series of published papers of which I am the first author. The co-authors of the published papers were supervisors of the thesis and provided direction and support for each of the publications.

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ABSTRACT

A radiation therapist is an important member of the multidisciplinary treatment approach to cancer. The complex and diverse role of a radiation therapist necessitates that practitioners are highly skilled, patient focused and reflective.

This research employed a Qualitative Analysis to explore issues that radiation therapy students documented in their freeform unguided writing in personal journals. This allowed for the changing focus of students' 'workplace learning' as they progress through the program to be mapped and compared with the actual curriculum of the program. After reading and analysing the student's personal journals it was evident that there was a need for the development and validation of a tool to assess written journals for evidence of reflection.

This research has developed and validated a tool Newcastle Reflective Analysis Tool (NRAT). Subsequent analysis of a cohort of radiation therapy student's freeform journals using the NRAT for evidence of reflection identified that, students find it difficult to reach the higher critical levels of reflection that can transform learning. This finding prompted the development and validation of short form guided reflective inventories called the Newcastle Reflective Inventories (NRIs). These inventories can be used in the undergraduate and practitioner setting to support and develop reflective writing and thinking skills. The NRIs guide and support students in higher levels of reflective writing, allowing insights into workplace experience.

The findings and tools developed from this research have been implemented within the RT program and other allied health programs at the University of Newcastle. There has also been international interest and support for the research and its findings from a spectrum of health profession disciplines.

Peer Reviewed Publications

Findlay N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, A qualitative analysis of radiation therapy students professional placement journals. (Submitted).

Findlay N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Developing a qualitative framework for analysis of student journals. *The Radiographer*. Vol 57 (2) pp 34-39, 2010

Findlay N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Development and validation of reflective inventories: assisting radiation therapists with reflective practice. *Journal of Radiotherapy in Practice*. Vol 10, pp 1-10, 2010

Findlay N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Validation and use of the Newcastle Reflective Analysis Tool: a three year longitudinal study of RT students' reflective journals. *Reflective Practice*. Vol 11 (1), pp 83-94, 2010

Findlay N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Development of the Newcastle Reflective Analysis Tool. *Focus on Health Professional Education: A Multi-Disciplinary Journal*. Vol 11 (1), pp 32-40, 2009

Chapman N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Workplace diaries promoting reflective practice in radiation therapy, *Radiography*, Vol 15 (2), pp 166-170, 2009

Chapman N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Theory of reflection in learning for radiation therapists. *The Radiographer*, Vol 55 (2), pp 29-32, 2008

Peer Reviewed Conference Publications

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Findlay N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Validation and use of the Newcastle Reflective Analysis Tool, RANZCR/AIR/FRO/ACPSEM 2009 Combined Scientific Meeting, Brisbane, Australia, October 2009.

Findlay N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Development and integration of the Newcastle Reflective Inventories into all three disciplines of the University of Newcastle MRS program, 11th Australasian Association of Educators in Medical Radiation Science conference, Brisbane, Australia, July 2009

Chapman N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Validating the Newcastle Reflective Analysis Tool – for guided assessment of reflective writing in health care, ANZAME The Association for Health Professional Education conference, Sydney, Australia, July 2008

Chapman N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Theory of Reflection in Learning for Radiation Therapists, Australian Institute of Radiography Annual Scientific Meeting of Medical Imaging and Radiation Therapy conference, Melbourne, Australia, March 2008

Chapman N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Reflective Inventories - Assisting health professional with reflective practice, ANZAME The Association for Health Professional Education conference, September 2007

Chapman N, Dempsey S, Warren-Forward H, Assessing student journals for evidence of reflection, 10th Australasian Association of Educators in Medical Radiation Science conference, Newcastle, Australia, July 2007

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LIST OF ABBREVIATED TERMS

AA	Absolute Agreement
AIR	Australian Institute of Radiography
ASRT	American Society of Radiation Technologists
BMRS	Bachelor Medical Radiation Science
BSRT	Breathing Synchronised Radiation Therapy
CA	Consensus Agreement
CBS	Competency Based Standards
CPD	Continual Professional Development
CR	Critical Reflector
CRT	Conformal Radiation Therapy
CT	Computed Tomography
DR	Diagnostic Radiography
EDW	Enhanced Dynamic Wedge
FTE	Full Time Equivalent
IMRT	Intensity Modulated Radiation Therapy
K	Kappa Coefficient
LLL	Lifelong Learning
MLC	Multi Leaf Collimator
MRI	Magnetic Resonance Imaging
MRS	Medical Radiation Science
NM	Nuclear Medicine
NR	Non Reflector
NRAT	Newcastle Reflective Analysis Tools
NRI	Newcastle Reflective Inventories
NSW	New South Wales
OT	Occupational Therapy
PDY	Professional Development Year
PET	Positron Emission Tomography
PT	Physical Therapy
QDA	Qualitative Descriptive Analysis
R	Reflector
RO	Radiation Oncologist
ROTC	Radiation Oncology Treatment Centre

RT	Radiation Therapy
RTAP	Radiation Therapy Advisory Panel
SOR	Society of Radiographers
TAFE	Technical and Further Education