What are the key dimensions of the personal tutor role for nurse education today? A literature review

MSc in Higher Professional Education (Oxford Brookes University)
Objectives of the Review

• To investigate the student expectations and experiences of personal tutoring an academic and non-academic support during their course in Higher Education
• To analyse and explain how the personal tutor role can maximise learning potential within nurse education
• To explore the key skills, training and development needs for nurse lecturers undertaking the personal tutor role
Background to the accepted position of the Personal Tutor Role

- Definitions and models of personal tutoring
- Institutional perspectives – widening participation/integrating personal tutor time into the curriculum
- Dearing report (1997)
  - Quality Assurance Agency for HE (QAA, 2004)
  - Higher Education Funding Council (HEFCE) funded University project PADSHE
  - Higher Education Academy
- National Student Survey 2005
Research Design

• Literature Review as a research method
• Rationale of literature review for this study
• Key Features of a Literature review
• Validity and Reliability as related to Qualitative research (Rigour)
• Critical Review Forms (McMasters University USA)
Method

- Data Sources including databases + search terms
- Inclusion/Exclusion criteria
- Validity and Reliability
- Data synthesis to get to 17 Papers
- Relevance to practice and policy
Some Findings

- Students valued the personal contact to settle into University and stay focused (enabling Student Development)
- Learner isolation
- Managing transition
- Peers not a replacement for staff
- Reflection on strengths and weakness aid development and persistence
- Personal contact before a crisis
- Intercultural sensitivity
- Use of reflection (practice)
- Lack of support from University staff a key factor to leave
• Lecturers pointed to lack of training and confidence with the role “swampy lowlands”
• Lack of formal guidelines
• Viewed as an important part of lecturers work but inequitable workload “supporter”
• Formative or Summative moved role into that of assessor “gatekeeper”
• Setting of boundaries
• Use of technology
• Needs to know the curriculum “up-to-datedness”
• Low success rate associated with not having met in the last 10 weeks
• Not a one-size-fits-all approach
Emerging Themes

• **Demonstration of a Relationship**
  • Personal supervision
  • Curriculum issues
  • Confidentiality

• **Maximising Learning**
  • Assessment
  • Practice issues
  • Employability

• **Recognition of a Professional Role**
  • Staff Development and Training
  • Central Support services
  • Workload
  • Code of Practice
Demonstration of a Relationship

- Establishing a relationship (student-student/student-staff/student-University)
- Personal Tutoring in a Virtual Learning Environment
- Curriculum knowledge
- Development of PDP (Portfolio)
- Reflection in practice
- Cultural issues
- Confidentiality
Maximising Learning

• Formative or Summative (alters relationship)

• Nursing Practice — underpinning professional knowledge and values with practice based evidence

• Professional culture — Personal tutors seeing tutees in practice

• Popular students (Popular patients)

• Socialization and role modelling of caring behaviours

• Employability
# Recognition of a Professional Role

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Personal Tutoring Policy</th>
<th>Focus for each Year Personal/Professional/Choice</th>
<th>Induction process</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Code of Good Practice</td>
<td>Skills training especially with the distressed student</td>
<td>Guide for both students and staff</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturers Educational Needs to facilitate reflection and academic development</td>
<td>Workload and equity of number of students</td>
<td>Good quality Central Support Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lecturer to take the initiative if the student did not</td>
<td>Published referral pathways</td>
<td>Component part of PGCE</td>
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16 Recommendations including:

• Further research utilising a wider range of research methods to explore benefits of personal tutoring
• Further research utilising a wider range of research methods into long-term effects of personal tutoring on retention
• Further research on support mechanisms for student nurses on clinical placement
• Organisational systems to improve contact whilst on clinical placement
• Use of e-technology, mobile technology and on-line support
• Structured Personal Tutor programme building different focus into each year of the course
• Access to Central Support services to be widely published and disseminated
• Published guidelines or Code of Good Practice for staff and students
• Include personal tutoring in PGCE course
• Evidence of acknowledgement of workload for personal tutor time
Conclusion

• There is a clear dissonance between student and tutor expectations of the role
• The role of induction is crucial
• Linking of academic and personal development of the student
• Encouraging independent learning
• Counter-balancing culture shock
• Clearer vision for the role not just an add-on
• Utilising emerging technology (e-learning strategies)
• Research on nursing students’ opinion
• Longitudinal research on benefits of Personal Tutoring
• Skills training for nurse lecturers
Personal Reflections

• Refining research skills
• Using technical tools of Endnotes
  Mind Genius
  Document Mapping