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Towards a discursive psychology of expertise in radiography education: Lecturers' use of "authenticity through autobiography" in classroom sessions

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Abstract

Background: Often drawing upon K. Anders Ericsson's approach (Ericsson, 2007), the contemporary corpus of research into radiography expertise tends to reflect a set of broadly social-cognitive concerns, whereby the knowledge and experience *acquired* by a professional are the focus (Donovan and Litchfield, 2013). The Discursive Psychological (DP) approach, however, provides an alternative model; herein, how expertise is *performed* becomes key (Wiggins, 2017) - DP describes how actors endeavour to make their own expertise persuasively and dynamically relevant in ways tailored to the intended audience.

Methods: Using the standard methods of DP (Miller and Richardson, 2017), N=10 classroom sessions were analysed to highlight the nuanced interpersonal ways in which experienced radiography lecturers performed their own expertise.

Results: Findings indicate the routine use of a socio-linguistic device termed "authenticity through autobiography" in the discursive sciences (Widdicombe and Wooffitt, 1995). The lecturers, in a variety of (usually) subtle ways, recurrently drew attention to: (1) The quantity and/or quality of their professional service in radiography; (2) the quantity and/or quality of their teaching experience; and (3) the quantity and/or quality of their research outputs and activities. All were raised only in moments whereby the specific topics of discussion - or the actions of the students - could in some way be inferred to contextually challenge the

lecturers' own status as experts. Moreover, the particular autobiographical details raised always directly addressed the specific nature and implications of any challenge.

Conclusions: The work presented draws attention to the importance of interpersonal performance in communicating information in radiography, such that it might be recognised by students *as* expert knowledge.

Keywords

authenticity; discursive psychology; expertise; higher education; language; radiography

References

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