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**“Looking back at my student years now...”: Recently-qualified radiographers’
retroactive understandings of key resilience sources**

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Background: The rapid evolution of healthcare provision models in the UK has left many Higher Education curricula in the medical imaging sciences struggling to fully equip their graduates for engagement with the vagaries of full clinical practice upon qualification (Sloane and Miller, 2017). Emerging from a national study of the practical experiences of recently-qualified diagnostic radiographers, however, this paper addresses key aspects of the participants’ undergraduate experience that *had* directly informed their subsequent resilience in the workplace.

Methods: With institutional ethical approval, N=20 diagnostic radiographers of one to two years post-graduation experience, working across the UK, sat for extended, semi-structured telephone interviews. Verbatim transcripts were analysed using Straussian Grounded Theory (Miller et al., 2019).

Results: Participants accounted that they had sourced resilience from many aspects of their undergraduate experience. Four issues, however, were recurrent in nearly all interviews. 1. Positive clinical experiences during placement routinely reassured participants they were ultimately “up to the job.” 2. “Errors without insults” during placement were taken to be

highly constructive development experiences. 3. Strong link-tutoring provided intellectual reinforcement of practical and social skills during placement. 4. Academic content that unambiguously elucidated its functional value was essential in providing confidence in procedural knowledge.

Conclusion: Observably, the strongest sources of resilience for participants with respect to their subsequent clinical practice were themselves practical in nature. While some found no difficulty in extracting confidence from more theoretical aspects of curricula, those aspects were still most successful when actively framed in the most practical terms possible.

References

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