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# **“Follow the yellow brick road” A case study exploring the lived experience of second year pre-registration student nurses’ on their self-directed learning journey(s) at a university in the north of England**

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Monday, 31st March - 16:25: 3.3 Student experience - Oral - Abstract ID: 295

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*Ms. Fay Codona (University of Cumbria)*

## **Aim Of Paper**

The aim of this presentation is to disseminate the findings from a piece of practitioner research conducted with BSc pre-registration nursing students at a widening participation university in the UK. The primary research aim was to illuminate the issues surrounding motivation and engagement with self-directed learning in the second year of the pre-registration nursing programme from the student perspective. The findings may help to further educator understanding of the student nurse learning journey and guide innovations to support student retention and success.

## **Abstract**

Second-year student nurses are particularly vulnerable to struggling with their studies and self-directed learning as the demands of their academic and clinical programme increase. To unpick the issues surrounding self-directed learning in year two, there must be an understanding of how this experience feels for students and what factors might impact the motivation and engagement of second years with self-directed learning. The following research questions were addressed:

What are second year pre-registration student nurses’ understandings of the purpose and importance of SDL?  
What are second year pre-registration student nurses’ experiences of the barriers to motivation and engagement with SDL?

A case study approach was selected as it offered the opportunity to provide a detailed account of the student experience. In addition to second-year students, third-year pre-registration student nurses were targeted for data collection due to their recent experience of completing year two and their ability to offer reflections on this. This research employed a semi-structured questionnaire completed by second-year students and an in-person focus group with third-year students. The findings from this case study reflected that a lack of understanding of self-directed learning is not the reason for a lack of engagement with it, as the students largely understood that they needed to “follow the yellow brick road” of self-directed learning to reach success (*The Wizard of Oz*, 1939). However, the research highlighted that the second year is overwhelming and stressful, creating multiple barriers to engagement with self-directed learning. The key implication for practice arising from the research is an enhanced educator understanding of the student experience of self-directed learning, which will assist educators to evaluate their own practice and develop new innovations to support the student journey.

## **Delegate Learning Outcomes**

The intended learning outcomes of the presentation are to develop understanding of the second-year student nurse experience of self-directed learning and what some of the student identified barriers to motivation and engagement with self-directed learning are within the research presented. It is hoped this will lead to reflection on practice, sharing of good practice, and generation of thought and discussion in relation to the issues raised.

## **Recommended Reading Titles**

N/A

## **Presenter biographies**

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**Fay Codona**

Fay studied Adult Nursing at the University of Cumbria in 2014, graduating as a registered nurse in 2017, subsequently working as a General Practice Nurse in Cumbria. Fay has been part of the nursing programme team at the University of Cumbria since March 2019, offering a unique perspective to the students as she has been in their shoes not too long ago! Fay is passionate about the student experience and innovation in nurse education; her current role is as a Senior Lecturer in Adult Nursing, with co-ordination responsibilities for year two of the nursing programme. Fay achieved a Masters in Education Professional Practice in 2024 with a focus on the student lived experience of self-directed learning in year two of the nursing undergraduate programme.