

# Physiotherapy students and practice -based educators' experiences of using placement passports during their practice-based education: A catalyst for growth?

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# Why do this study?

- **Practice placements are considered as potential sources for making student learning and curriculum more relevant, facilitating professional learning and self-development** (Trede, 2012; Webster-Wright, 2009 ).
- **A number of our students entering health professional courses have additional needs and it is essential they are fully supported to experience high quality learning experiences in preparation for qualification** (Equality and Diversity Act,2010)



# Practice education

## **Shortage of studies related:**

- To students experience of learning in practice
- Transition from campus to practice placement learning

## **Shortage of studies related to:**

- Pre- placement preparation
- Bridging campus based and practice based learning



# Research Context



## The practice learning environment

- Current challenges of Health & Social Care
- Frenetic and complex learning environments
- “Swampy lowlands of practice”  
(Schon, 1983, p42)



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# Our situation



- Practice education is an integral part of the curriculum (1000 hours)
- Placements are mandatory for all health students.
- In Physiotherapy, placement marks contribute towards the degree classification
- The practice placement is marked/graded based on the use of specific assessment criteria within the assessment tool which contains a learning contract
- Senior physiotherapists in their role as practice educators facilitate and assess student learning



# Aims of the placement passport

- designed to support students' prior disclosure of learning needs including additional learning needs.
- to facilitate disclosure across the whole cohort and to encourage students to identify their strengths and areas for development
- Passport precursor to facilitating negotiation phase of learning agreements.



# Our study

- Ethical approval was gained from a University of Brighton Ethics and Governance Panel.
- Two focus groups one with final year BSc(Hons) Physiotherapy students and one with current practice educators.
- An interpretative qualitative design was used, with transcripts analysed using Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke 2006).
- Nine participants were recruited, 4 final year students and 5 practice educators.



# Emerging themes:



being

belonging

becoming

engaging in opportunities  
value and  
acknowledgement  
catalyst / hindrance for  
growth

catalyst for collaboration  
Fostering learning  
partnerships  
optimising opportunities

- maximising opportunities
- promotion of self evaluation
- Feeding forward for future learning and realising potential



# 'Being'

*'It gives students a platform before they come to placement to showcase their strengths and areas for development'*

*(Ed 5)*

*' Kind of more caring...and kind of (knowing) what you are as a person ..a human connection '*

*(St 3)*

*'I think it's beneficial for the educators to have that insight because it takes some planning and organisation to arrange different things if I want to look' (St 2)*



# 'Belonging'

- *Some see it as a tick box exercise...but for those who put effort in.. There is a plan of action for the whole placement, learning needs, development needs and teaching sessions all incorporated. (Ed 3)*
- *'for the next one coming, ... next coming placement, they'd already addressed it kind of in the email. Like always seen how we may be able to kind of accommodate for this even before I came in... into contact' so I feel that's kind of more beneficial and maybe um... kind of more caring towards like what you want, what you want to learn from that placement' (St,2)*
- *if there's some kind of common ground there, then it might make it a bit easier for both the student and the educator possibly. (St,3)*



# 'Becoming'

*'You're also kind of re-seeing it each time you do a placement what you've learned and how you've kind of changed and what you've done for action plans, through the reflections of the other placements and what you've done. I found that aspect quite good, just er... and just keep on building from there as a continuous like development' (St 2)*

*'We got talking...I was on NHS jobs anyway... near the end of her placement and she said let me show you my next passport...and I thought yes she knows where she is at..it was really good (Ed1)*



# Links to theoretical concepts

- Gloria D'Alba (2009) professional ways of being, becoming
- Lave and Wenger (1991) Communities of Practice



# Benefits

- Tool for facilitating transition to practice
- Promotes inclusivity and reflective practice
- Educators valued students' active engagement with the tool in an open and transparent way, demonstrating their ability to self-evaluate and identify their learning needs.
- Platform – promoting a holistic approach to placement learning



# Areas for development

## Feeding forward

- Need for all practice educators to acknowledge and review the content of student passports, demonstrating commitment to the process
- Student reticence to disclose weakness linked to assessment /mark
- Students' perception that educators used passport disclosure to focus on their disclosed weaknesses
- Need for educators and learners to adopt a reciprocal humanistic approach to facilitate more sharing of information



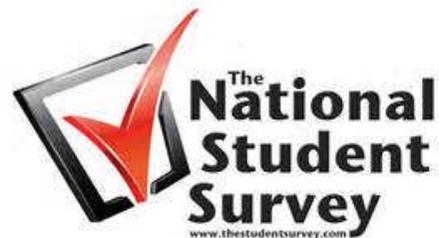
# Limitations of the study

- One cohort only, small numbers of students volunteered.
- One of the researchers is part of the small practice education team responsible for practice education for the physiotherapy programme.
- Participants self selected, invested in the passport already?
- Access to a range of practice educators across the south east limited by time for travel/focus groups. Exploring for future work focus groups online?

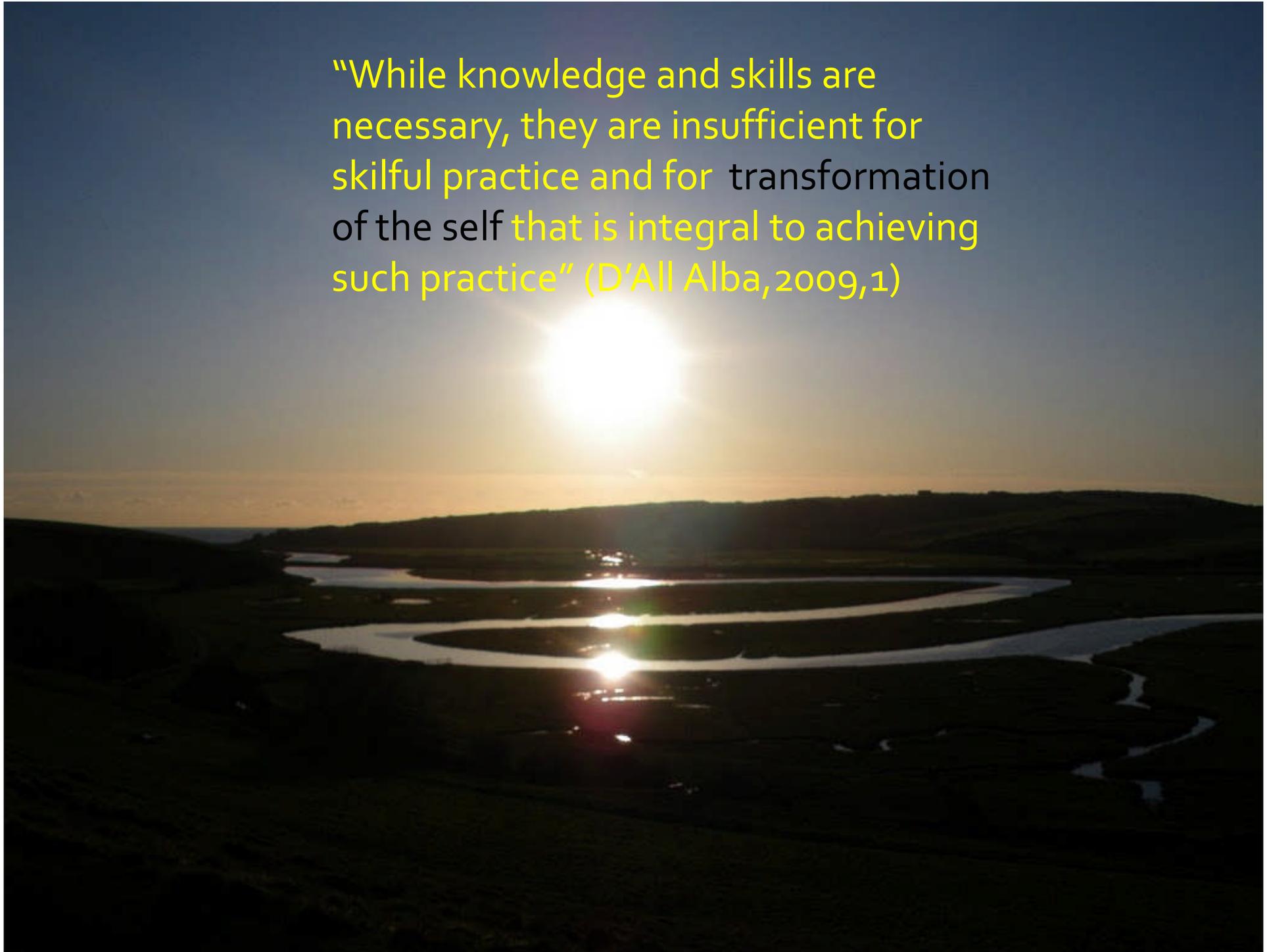


# Implications for quality

- Potential for improving quality of learning and teaching on placements
- Potential for promoting inclusive practice
- Increased partnership in learning promoting reflection and reciprocal feedback (UOB Strategy)
- Linked to employability skills
- Links with NSS and Teaching Excellence Framework



“While knowledge and skills are necessary, they are insufficient for skilful practice and for transformation of the self that is integral to achieving such practice” (D’All Alba, 2009, 1)



# References

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