A Reflection on Leaving a Legacy

This autumn, the physiotherapy education community in the United Kingdom mourned the loss of one of its most prominent members, Vinette Cross – Viny, as she was known to her friends and colleagues. Viny continued to develop diverse interests right up to becoming ill last summer, including working as a senior research fellow at the University of Wolverhampton (focussing on ethnicity and health), and at the University of Brighton (focussing on pedagogic and clinical education research). She was also an honorary research fellow with the Birmingham and Midland Eye Centre, where she focused on research related to glaucoma.

As a Fellow of the Chartered Society of Physiotherapy, Viny had an extensive career in pre- and post-registration professional education, and research across a range of health care disciplines. Her interests in the work-based learning aspects of practice for practitioners at all levels meant that she was an ideal co-editor for the International Journal of Practice-based Learning in Health and Social Care. In her role as a founder member of the editorial team, many authors will have had the benefit of Viny’s incisive, yet constructive comments that helped to progress articles to fruition.

Viny’s own work stretches back over several decades, charting the ways in which her interests have developed and how her style and focus have changed. Just as her work demonstrates, writing is accumulative. The poet Derek Walcott suggests that writing involves an apprenticeship based on writing lots, and writing consistently. Such apprenticeship is evident in the sophistication, yet clarity of Viny’s work. In recent years, her interests included professional development, teaching, learning, and mentorship as well as the patient experience. Her tendency to adopt more qualitative approaches led her to explore narrative inquiry and analysis leading to new approaches to research dissemination, including the use of poetry.

The last time I saw Viny was at the 2017 National Association of Educators in Practice (NAEP) Conference in April at which she presented a session titled ‘Narrativity and reflexivity in practice-based education. Turning data into drama.’ Typically, this was a session with a difference, based on a slide-show, including family photographs that connected with a sense of personal narrative. Whether she had a chance to write up her presentation I do not know, but I do hope so.

Thinking of the legacy that Viny has left behind that will no doubt inform many future projects, research reports and articles, highlights the importance of sharing insights and ideas. Many of
the journal’s readers will never write an article but writing usually starts with reading, and the reader can quickly identify and follow accepted techniques and principles to become a writer with their own voice and style.

This issue of the journal provides readers with a diverse selection of articles spanning health and social care. Topics range from issues of professional identity development, interprofessional supervision, and strategies to foster students’ self-care and personal resilience. Concepts of person-centred care, and the preparation of students for working with people with a disability are explored, and issues of placement quality and placement capacity debated.

Each article in its own small way will hopefully inspire readers to consider the relevance to their own experience or work, whatever that might be, and for the authors, a step in creating their own legacy for their educational community.

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